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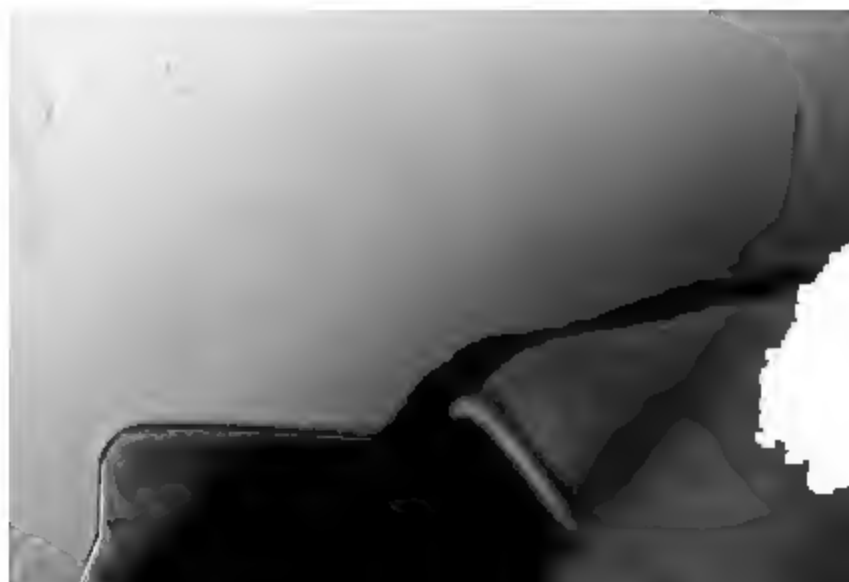
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THE
GREAT METROPOLIS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LORDS AND
COMMONS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND SERIES.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1837.

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PRINTED BY IBOTSON AND PALMER,
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PREFACE.

As it was impossible, in the limited space of two volumes, to do anything like justice to so comprehensive a subject as "The Great Metropolis," the Author has followed out his plan by the publication of a Second Series of the work. The very great success of the first two volumes, coupled with the circumstance of their being necessarily incomplete of themselves, has induced the Author to lose no longer time in the preparation of the present, than was rendered unavoidable from the nature of the undertaking.

London, May 3, 1837.

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THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

CHAPTER I.

ALMACK'S.*

Interest it creates—Its origin—Constitution—The Season—Admission into—Anxiety to be admitted—Its influence on the fashionable world—Splendour of its balls—Its dances—Unhappiness of ladies in it—The injury it inflicts on many families—Difficulty of breaking up the monopoly.

ALMACK'S! What a sound! With what powerful emotions does many a fair bosom beat at the mere mention of it! It is the subject of the nocturnal visions of thousands of both sexes in the fashionable world: it is the subject also of

* It may be right to mention, that for much of the information contained in this chapter, I am indebted to one who has been many years a member.

their day dreams. It is the everlasting topic of conversation in the aristocratic circles. You hear it repeated a thousand times perhaps a day. "Are you a subscriber to Almack's this season?" "Have you applied for admission to Almack's?" "What a dashing ball that was at Almack's on Wednesday!" "I did not see you at Almack's last night!" "Have you heard that the Mortons have applied for admission to Almack's and been rejected?" "I'm sure those vulgar low-bred creatures the Cottons have not the least chance of being admitted: it was a piece of great assurance on their part to suppose the ladies-patronesses could listen for a moment to an application from such a quarter." "O, I never saw the Marchioness of Londonderry look so well as she did at the last Almack's; she was so splendidly dressed." "That brute Lord Landonvale was quite tipsy at Almack's last night: I was sorry to see mamma give him the slightest countenance." These, and a hundred other expressions, are quite current in the higher circles on the subject of Almack's. Beyond

those, however, who are members, scarcely any one has any idea of what Almack's really is; and even by such as are subscribers, comparatively little, with few exceptions, is known of it.

When, or under what particular circumstances, Almack's was originally instituted, is not exactly known. It is first accidentally noticed by Horace Walpole, who says, "There is a new institution which begins to make, and if it proceeds, will make, a considerable noise. It is a club of both sexes, to be erected at Almack's on the mode of that of the men of White's. Mrs. Fitzroy, Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Leynell, and Miss Lloyd, are the patronesses." I have not been able to ascertain the precise time at which this was written; otherwise it were easy to find out the year in which Almack's was instituted. It may, however, be said in general terms to have been about a century ago. The institution took its name, just as our modern clubs do, from that of the proprietor of the rooms in which the meetings were held. The same title is still retained, as in the case of White's and Brookes's, though Almack

has slept with his fathers for considerably more than half a century. The present proprietor of the rooms in which the balls take place, is Mr. Willis, to whom I shall have occasion to refer two or three times in the course of the chapter.

Soon after the institution of Almack's, it was for some years discontinued, owing to some misunderstanding among the ladies-patronesses. It was re-organised on such an extensive scale, and under such powerful patronage, that it assumed a sway and importance in the fashionable world which its foundresses never contemplated. That influence on the *bon ton* it still continues to exercise. And a more despotic power never existed. All that we read about political slavery in other countries, is not to be compared to this. The fashionable world are bound hand and foot to the half dozen fair tyrants in King-street, St. James's. The conclave who sit there around a table covered with red cloth, every Monday during the season, have the power, by their single fiat, of making or unmaking entire families. They can open or shut the doors

of fashionable life on them, by the mere circumstance of giving or withholding a ticket to Almack's. The proudest and most aristocratic family in the land are fain to bow down, and with cap in hand, to use a homely but expressive phrase, supplicate "a subscription" from this "coalition cabal." To be a member of Almack's is a sure passport to the very first society: it is to give either a lady or gentleman the highest status in the world of fashion to which human beings can attain. To be refused admission to Almack's—I mean that sort of refusal which is well known to be tantamount to a perpetual exclusion—is to blast one's prospects, in so far as aristocratic society is concerned, for life. What renders the absolute power of the committee of Almack's the more terrible to the lords and ladies of the land is, that it is often exercised in the most capricious manner. If either of the ladies-patronesses have any personal dislikes to gratify—and I need not say the probability is, that all of them have many—they have it in their power to get their "little sweet re-

venge" when sitting in full divan around the "board of red cloth." They unhesitatingly refuse to admit the applicant; and they are not called upon to assign any reason for pronouncing a fiat of exclusion. The thing is done at once: there is no appeal. It is in vain that the parties boast, perhaps, of belonging to one of the most ancient and noblest families in Great Britain: in the fashionable world, if excluded from Almack's, that will not avail them. How the unlimited power which the committee at Almack's possess, is exercised, will appear from some of the statements which I am about to make.

The committee consists of six ladies-patronesses. Formerly there were seven; but since the Princess Lieven, the celebrated Russian politician and beauty, quitted this country, the number has been only six. They are the Countess of Jersey, the Marchioness of Londonderry, Lady Cowper, the Countess of Brownlow, Lady Willoughby D'Eresby, and the Countess of Euston.

These ladies-patronesses are self-elected.

Whenever one of them dies or resigns, the others meet together, and after a great deal of canvassing of the merits of the various parties proposed by each other, the lady for whom there is the greatest number of votes is chosen. When the office of lady-patroness is vacant, innumerable intrigues—many of them such as, one would think, no lady, far less a lady of the highest class, would on any consideration be a party to—are set on foot to carry the private ends of some of the ladies-patronesses. The Countess of Jersey may have some friend she wishes, for particular reasons, to be appointed to fill the vacant office. Lady Cowper has another. Then comes the din of war. Each of the other three ladies-patronesses may possibly have some “dear friend” in her eye whom she would like to see around the “board of red cloth ;” but usually one or two lord it—perhaps in this case I should rather say, “lady” it—over the rest. And whenever it is seen that those possessing the most sway, either from imperiousness of manner or some peculiar persuasiveness when pressing

their point, are determined to insist on the parties they propose, the more good-natured and less decided of the number forbear to urge their suit, and join with either of the two great belligerents. A well and obstinately contested point of this kind by these arbitresses of fashion and influence in aristocratic society, is one of the richest scenes which could possibly occur. Not long since there was "a contested election" of this kind in Willis's Rooms, when the "ruling passion," and every other passion, of the two ladies-patronesses who opposed each other on the occasion, were shown off, as a sportsman would say, in excellent style. The conventional rules of aristocratic society were all set at defiance: the usual courtesies of life were disregarded, and the two patronesses made use of terms to each other's faces which they had often employed behind each other's backs. Each, in plain English, lost her temper, and vented her spleen in terms which one does not expect to hear escape "fair ladies'" lips. Of the two, Lady Dominant, who had usually got things her

own way before, worked herself into the greatest paroxysm of passion. She coloured deeply; one would have thought all the blood in her body had risen to her face. Had she been single, and a host of lovers been at the moment at her feet, the terrific frown which clouded her brow would have scattered them *instantly* in all directions; and not one of them would ever afterwards have penned a sonnet to her “beautiful eyes,” her “lovely lips,” or to any other real or imaginary attraction. The tones of her voice, too, as well as the words themselves, bespoke the violence of the storm which raged in her bosom. What a pity that under so fair and fascinating an exterior, there could be so much of fierce and furious passion. The Baroness Positive was somewhat more measured in her indignation; she did not, at any rate, lose the command of her temper so entirely. The language she made use of in attack or defence, just as the case happened, was not so unmeasured as that employed by her opponent; but there was, if possible, more of deep-rooted ill-nature in it,

and it must have left a much deeper sting than the plain-spoken words of Lady Dominant. The truth in this case was, as it would be found in many other cases not altogether dissimilar—the truth was, that the belligerents had long been rivals for supreme dominion in Almack's, and in this instance they contested the point with such violence and pertinacity, not because they cared anything for the party whose cause they espoused, abstractedly considered, but because the principle involved was their own relative power at the board. Hitherto Lady Dominant had, as before-mentioned, carried things, in most cases, whatever way she liked. This the Baroness thought ought not to be suffered; and with the view of trying what might be done in the way of curtailing her ladyship's influence, by a bold and pertinacious resistance to her authority, she nominated a friend for the vacant office, in opposition to the protégée brought forward by her rival. The effort, however, was unsuccessful. Lady Dominant succeeded by a majority of one in carrying her point, there being

three of the other ladies-patronesses in favour of *her* “ dear friend,” while only two espoused the cause of the Baroness.

The elections of ladies-patronesses are for life, —only any one is liable to be expelled should a majority decide on the expediency of such a step. This, however, is never done, unless it unfortunately happened that the party had made some egregious false step in morals, which had been “ duly brought under the public eye.” When one lady-patroness becomes peculiarly obnoxious to one or more of the other ladies-patronesses—no very rare case, by the way—the course adopted for getting rid of the “ odious creature,” or the “ horrid woman,” is to annoy her in every possible way. The insults and indignities heaped on one of the divan, by Lady Dominant and one of her creatures, some years ago, exceeded the bounds of credibility, and were the subject of universal remark at the time. The insulted party at last sought refuge from the persecution to which she was subjected, in resignation.

The season at Almack's usually commences in the second week of April, and ends about the middle of July. The committee, *alias* the six ladies-patronesses, meet every Wednesday between the hours of three and six, at Willis's Rooms, for the purpose of deciding on all applications for admission, and making the other requisite arrangements for the various balls. Each lady sits down at the round table with her desk before her; while the secretary, rather a good-looking sort of personage, not quite a youth nor yet stooping under the antiquity of existence, sits a little behind. The triangular pieces of paper which Mr. Willis has previously put into a box, containing the various applications for admission, are then taken out, opened, and read. The claims of each candidate are then discussed *seriatim*. And such a discussion! Could the poor unhappy parties themselves—no matter which sex has the honour of claiming them—only overhear all that is said of them,—I mean when the committee are not at once unanimous for their admission,—they would then have some

notion, if they never had any before, of what Shakspeare meant when he makes Hamlet say he will "speak daggers" to his mother. Miss Manchester applied at the beginning of last season for a ticket. "Who is this Miss Manchester?" inquired Lady Dominant. "Does anybody know anything about her? I never heard the name before."

"Nor I," said the Marchioness of Duffus. "Some upstart vulgar creature of city origin, I suppose," she continued, giving her head a most contemptuous toss.

"She is a very respectable young lady; I have seen her two or three times, and she is possessed of an immense fortune," said Baroness Positive.

"Made, I have no doubt, by her father's spinning-jennies," said Lady Dominant, sneeringly.

"Her father is a manufacturer in the Manchester trade, but he is a most respectable man: my brother and he are on very intimate terms," said the Baroness.

“ Well, surely the impudence of these low-bred, vulgar people ! it exceeds everything,” said the Countess of Speyside. “ Why, after this, it would not surprise me to see every coal-merchant’s daughter in the city applying for admission.”

“ O ! the very idea of the thing is monstrous,” observed Lady Rafford. “ Besides, the creature’s a perfect fright. You know, my dear Baroness, you pointed her out to me one day in the Strand.”

“ Quite a turnip face, I dare say,” said Lady Dominant.

“ And cats’s-eyes, I’ll answer for it,” observed the Marchioness.

“ You are both right,” said Lady Rafford. “ And you might have added carrotty-hair. The very thought of such a horrid-looking creature, and a cotton-merchant’s daughter, waltzing at Almack’s, almost throws me into hysterics.”

“ I think you are unreasonably severe,” observed the Baroness. “ She is heiress to a princely fortune. Her father is worth half-a-million,

and her hand would therefore be deemed a prize by any nobleman in the land. My brother, Colonel Vincent, has begged of me as a particular favour, to do all I can to get her admitted, and I therefore hope your ladyships will give her a voucher."

"Yes," said Lady Dominant, bridling up, "yes, if we wish to disgrace ourselves and the order to which we belong. If we did, I dare say," she continued, biting her lip and tossing her head, "I dare say the piece of vulgarity would come to our balls dressed in some of her father's cotton-cloth. Better admit our housemaids at once."

"I'll engage," said Lady Rafford, assuming an air of unwonted self-importance, "I'll engage this would-be-fashionable Miss Vulgarity could not acquit herself, though she were here, so well as one of my waiting-maids."

"O!" said Lady Dominant tartly, and with some haste, "O let us be done with this poor empty-headed but aspiring cotton-spinning

Miss; the very idea of listening for one moment to her application is perfectly monstrous."

Miss Manchester was of course refused a ticket, there being no one but the Baroness to support her claim. Neither would she but for the circumstance that her brother, who has since married Miss Manchester, had so urgently pressed her to do so.

But it is where there is a personal ill-will on the part of some of the ladies-patronesses towards the party applying, that these ladies give the best proof of what they can do in the way of mangling one's character and wounding one's feelings at the same time.

Gentlemen have to apply in the same way as ladies for their tickets of admission. And their several characters are often subjected to a severe ordeal. In cases, however, where the candidate belongs to a family of great distinction, and above all, if he have a high title, and be an "elder son," great allowances are generally made for him. The Countess of Guernsey says,

and no one can question its truth, that if the ladies-patronesses were to be *too* strict on the question of morals, there would be no gentlemen at all at Almack's; the ladies would have the balls to themselves, and would require to make partners of each other, the best way they could. In the case of the "detrimentals," viz. younger brothers, however, the same allowances are not made. Their being *roués*, is often a very convenient pretext for their exclusion. The observation of a lady-patroness, in a younger brother's case, when it is wished to refuse him admission is, that "No man's daughter would be safe in his company; none of us could admit him into our houses." The most dissolute "~~elder~~ brother," however, in England, provided he has a good title, and either has, or is heir to, a good estate, finds ready admission, when there are no personal feelings in the matter, both into Almack's, and into their houses. In either case he encounters nothing but smiling faces both on the part of the mothers and daughters.

Sometimes, when the ladies-patronesses are not very decided either in acceding to or rejecting an application, they agree to give a ticket to the party for one night, or three tickets for a set, as they are called, of the balls. In those cases where the candidate is deemed particularly eligible, either from rank, beauty, friends, or any other cause, the ticket is granted for the season, and is called a subscription. The price of each ticket is seven-shillings-and-sixpence. About twenty years ago it was a guinea; but a supper was then provided, and no additional charge made. Now there is no supper; there is nothing in the shape of refreshments but tea and lemonade, and the worst of it is, that both articles are so miserably bad that it requires an effort to drink either. The lemonade is sour as vinegar; while to apply the word tea to the stuff called by that name at Almack's, were one of the most unwarrantable perversions of language ever perpetrated. Give it to any person without calling it by any name, and that person will

soon find one for himself. He will at once call it chalk and water.

When the six goddesses of fashion and manners are seated at the table to decide on the claims of the various applicants, they have three baskets beside them. The first and largest basket contains the triangular billets in which the applications are made. The second basket contains the names of the parties whose claims are admitted; and in the third are the names of those who are doomed to exclusion. It sometimes happens, however, that this exclusion may not be intended to be perpetual. There may not be any very strong objection to the parties; but the list of members may chance to be pretty full at the time, and the claims, in the meantime, of other persons are considered superior to theirs. Those, on the other hand, as in the case of Miss Manchester, or some "detrimental," who in consequence of his elder brother being married and having a family, has no earthly chance of ever being aught but a "detrimental,"—in such cases, where the doom is in-

tended to be everlasting, the names of the parties are entered in a book kept by the ladies-patronesses for the purpose, which saves all future trouble should the parties ever apply again. Their names being found in this black-book settles the question of their admissibility at once.

When parties are refused a ticket, the painful intimation is conveyed to them in a printed circular, with a blank left to be filled up with the unfortunate name. The intimation is laconic enough. It assigns no reason for the refusal. It is to this effect:—"The ladies-patronesses' compliments to Mr. or Miss So-and-so, and are sorry they cannot comply with his or her request." This is not sent to the residence of the parties by the two-penny post, or by any of Willis's servants. All intimations of rejection are left with Willis, and the parties only learn the result by calling on him for the "answer," as it is termed. These answers, like the applications, are all contained in three-cornered notes.

When the claims of a candidate are admitted, the ticket, or voucher, as it is called, signed by one of the ladies-patronesses, is left for him with Willis. Every one on going to the balls must present his ticket: it is not enough that Willis or any other person knows quite well that he has been admitted.

It is impossible to conceive the interest shown by the candidates and their immediate friends as to the fate of their applications. Instead of waiting to learn in the usual way, they often have Lord This, or Colonel That, whom they know to be acquainted with one or other of the ladies-patronesses, waiting on horseback at the corner of King Street, to ascertain from her lips the result. If the party be admitted, the other flies to his residence with the rapidity of lightning to announce the joyful news. If not admitted, you may read the fact from the appearance of the horse. No perspiration is dropping from the animal: there is no foam about his mouth: he at least is a gainer by the rejection of the friend of his master: no spurs have been

darted into his sides on his way to the residence of the unsuccessful candidate.

No one not acquainted with the fact from observation, or from the communications of persons who are so, could have any idea of the influence put in requisition to gain admittance into Almack's. It is a fact which may startle some when they hear it stated, but it is a fact, as the aristocracy will all bear testimony, that many families evince as great anxiety, and make as great exertions, to get their daughters into Almack's, as they do to get their sons into parliament. And the disappointment, when they do not succeed, is often greater in the former than it is in the latter case. In the one case it is only looked on as a question of the preponderance of family influence in a particular part of the country, and the comparative popularity of a certain class of principles ; in the other, it is regarded as the lowering of the unsuccessful party in the scale of social importance : a putting, as it were, an extinguisher on one's pretensions to move in a certain sphere of life. A young lady, before

she receives a subscription to Almack's, and after she has had that distinction conferred on her, can scarcely be regarded as the same person. She may, after dancing at Almack's, aspire to move in a circle of society, of which she could not have dreamt before. She has now the chance of receiving proposals for her hand in marriage, from parties who would not before have deemed her on a level with themselves. It is the same with the male sex. The gentleman who is admitted to Almack's, though only moving in a comparatively humble sphere of life before, may now hold up his head in the best society to be met with in the country; and he may, without incurring the risk of being considered presumptuous, solicit the hand of any lady in the kingdom.

But independently of the opportunities which admission into Almack's affords of getting into the very highest order of society afterwards, such admission is a matter of great importance both to unmarried ladies and unmarried gentlemen, from their being there brought into con-

tact. One great object which the ladies-patronesses have in view, and of which they never lose sight in their admission of candidates, is to bring about matches between the sexes. And this object is accomplished to an extent to which none but the members have any idea. There the youthful aristocracy of both sexes meet, week after week, during the whole of the season : there the young nobleman sees around him all the beauty of the order to which he belongs. The probability is, that he fixes his affections on some particular lady. They dance together, and then retire to the tea-room, which is at the furthest end of the ball-room, where, sitting down on one of the sofas, he whispers into her ear a declaration of love. She blushes ; he reads—for all lovers are skilful physiognomists, whatever other people may be—he reads in her flurried countenance that she is propitious. Taking courage from such favourable appearances, he proceeds, if hurried on by the impulses of his ardent affection, to the next step, which is to propose ; or, if not so very

violently in love as to be unable to restrain himself from making a point-blank proposal at once, he defers it till they meet again at Almack's next week ; and then the business may be said to be done. The remaining arrangements follow as a matter of course. In the aristocratic world little time is spent in courtship, compared with that which is usually consumed in paying and receiving addresses among the middle and lower classes.

In the tea-room many elopements have been planned, as well as proposals of marriage made. It was in that small room that an elopement which excited so much interest in the fashionable world, a few years ago, was agreed on. The rich heiress had just been conducted thither by the partner with whom she had danced, under the pretext of receiving some refreshment. The father suspected nothing wrong ; but lest he should observe the whisperings that passed between the parties, two ladies who were in the secret, and in the interest of the young gentleman, stood together immediately before them,

in such a position, apparently engaged in earnest conversation, as to render it impossible he could perceive that anything confidential was taking place.

So anxious are the committee of Almack's to promote matrimonial matches, that they often refuse to admit young gentlemen whom they think in marriageable circumstances, to a third season, because he has "done no good" the two first. They reason in this way:—The young gentleman who is in circumstances to justify his marrying, and who has withstood all the female attractions of two seasons, will, in all probability, become a confirmed bachelor—a sort of animal who has no business at Willis's Rooms. I think there is much sound philosophy in this reasoning, and much wisdom in the determination to give no encouragement to bachelors. They are a moral nuisance in the company of marriageable ladies,—as they also are, very often, in the society of their own sex. It is tantalising to a young lady, after having perhaps for years been, to use a homely phrase, "setting her cap" at

one of these personages—to her own prejudice it may be, in relation to other suitors, who would have proved excellent husbands,—it is tantalising to find after all that he is invulnerable to female fascination.

The tickets which are given to gentlemen candidates, whether for the season or for a set of balls, or for a single night only, are not transferable to any other party. Ladies' tickets are transferable from a mother to a daughter, from a daughter to a mother, or from sister to sister; but in no other case. No family is allowed to have more than three ladies' tickets. It is an understood thing among the ladies-patronesses, that no subscription or ticket be given by either of themselves to a lady whom the lady-patroness does not visit, or to a gentleman who is not introduced to her by a lady who is on her visiting list. No lady's or gentleman's name can continue on the list of the same lady-patroness for more than two sets of balls; nor are ladies to consider themselves entitled to the second set of balls, unless it has been so inti-

mated to them when they received their vouchers for the first. There is another regulation strictly observed by the ladies-patronesses, which is, that no lady or gentleman shall have more than six tickets from the same lady-patroness during the season.

There is one thing which has always characterised Almack's : that is the entire absence of political feeling in the administration of its affairs. The ladies-patronesses, like most of the other female branches of the nobility, have their own individual prejudices and partialities on political subjects ; but they never carry them into the committee-room. Their politics have nothing to do with the election of each other when there are any vacancies, nor do they ever influence their decisions as to the admission or rejection of the candidates.

The ladies-patronesses have for many years past consisted exclusively of married ladies. This indeed, as matters are now managed, is an indispensable regulation. There are many little things connected with the discharge of their offi-

cial duties, which would not altogether suit the delicacy requisite in young misses.

The office is no sinecure. The duties connected with it are of the most arduous nature. The solicitations the patronesses are ever receiving from all parties, praying them to use their influence on this one's behalf, and the next one's behalf, were enough to try the patience of the most philosophic lady in existence. Then there is the trouble of opening and examining the host of three-cornered applications on paper, at Willis's rooms, together with a thousand other little matters which must be attended to. Those only who have had to bear the burden of so much business, can tell what its weight is. So entirely are the ladies-patronesses engaged with the cares of office during the season, that one and all of their husbands protest they are perfectly useless as regards their domestic duties. Some of these unhappy husbands wish that their being useless were the worst of the evil. Not only is everything neglected at home, to the unspeakable joy of the servants, who do not fail to

have *their* "season" too ; but the Almack's mania is carried to such a height, that the unlucky husbands never know when their carriages or horses are at their own disposal, or when they are not. A lady is in ecstasies of delight when she is chosen one of the patronesses ; she overlooks the trouble and fatigue in the honour and power the office confers on her ; but no one yet ever heard of a husband being glad to learn that his wife had been chosen one of the ministers in this great temple of fashion ; all of them have been heard rather to lament the circumstance, as one of the greatest calamities of their life, and to wish Almack's at the—I will not say where ; because the poor husbands say it thoughtlessly and in the heat of the moment.

The room in which the balls take place is one of the most beautiful in London : perhaps I might say it is not to be surpassed anywhere else. When lighted up it has a most dazzling effect ; and I need not say what the scene must be when crowded with all the beauty which the aristocracy can boast. The doors are thrown

open at ten o'clock; betwixt that time and eleven, the bustle and animation in St. James's Street exceeds anything which the mind can picture to itself. You hear far and near the cracking of the whip, the clattering of the horses' hoofs, the rattling of the carriages, the hallooing of coachmen and footmen; and you see the most splendid equipages, bearing with them the choicest beauty and fashion of the land, flying past you every moment, all on their way to the scene of action for the night. Dancing commences at eleven. Either Weippert or Collinet then strikes up his band. From that moment till four o'clock, there is no repose for the poor fiddlers: they, indeed, are the only mortals to be pitied there. And yet, I am not sure after all, whether that which would under other circumstances, be an intolerable labour, be not so much lightened by the "bright phalanx of beauty," as Sir Samuel Whalley would say, before them, as to be scarcely any labour at all.

Formerly the rooms were shut at twelve o'clock

precisely, and no member was, under any circumstances, whatever might be the rank of the party, admitted after that hour. Some years since, however, the ladies-patronesses came to a resolution that an exception should be made in favour of those members who belonged to either House of Parliament.

The circumstances under which this exemption in their favour was made, were amusing. The Duke of Wellington came in breathless haste one evening to King Street, just as an important debate had been concluded in the House of Lords, and rushing up to the door, requested admittance. It was then precisely five minutes past twelve. He was told by the person stationed at the door that he was too late, and that he could not be admitted. "Humph!" said his Grace, in his own peculiar manner, and looking at the person who refused to open the door, with an expression of countenance which almost petrified the poor fellow, "Humph! it's only a few minutes past twelve."

"Can't help it, your Grace; am sorry, but

the orders of the ladies-patronesses are peremptory that no one be admitted after twelve."

"Sir, open the door this instant," said the Duke, sternly.

"Can't do it, your Grace," was the answer.

The Duke, for the first time in his life, now knew what it was to command without being obeyed. The poor wight of a door-keeper though afraid of offending the Duke, was still more so of offending their highnesses, the ladies-patronesses.

"And you won't open the door then," said the Duke, once more.

"I daren't do it, your Grace: my orders are most positive."

"Then, sir, you shall hear more of this," said the Duke, and wheeling about on his heel, he quitted the place.

The circumstance having been brought before the ladies-patronesses, they came to the resolution of making an exception in favour of members of both Houses of Parliament.

The room, which is spacious and lofty, is

lined all round with two ranges of sofas. The ladies-patronesses have one sofa appropriated to themselves at the upper end. It is an interesting sight to see the various sofas gradually filling as the distinguished visitors drop, one after the other, into the room. A little before the dance commences, and when almost all have arrived, and are seated on the sofas, the scene is one which it is not for me to attempt to describe. At a late ball, a stupid old nobleman, contrary to the etiquette on such occasions, walked over from one side to another to speak to the Dowager Duchess of Rothiemurchus. The daughter of the latter gently reproved him by saying, "Your Grace must be a bold man to cross the room just now with all eyes upon you." "He must, indeed," said a noble marquis, of great military reputation, to whom the young lady afterwards repeated the observation, "he must, indeed. I know this, that I would at any time much sooner face the enemy on the field of battle, than have walked slowly over the room, as he did, at such a moment."

In order that no one may encroach on the space set apart for the dancers, it is marked off by ropes, which extend along the room. This has the desired effect; the space intended is always kept clear; but some of the more spirited of the dancers, especially among the male sex, often dash against the ropes in the midst of the gallopade, and sometimes, by the rebound, are thrown prostrate on the floor. There would be no harm in this, if they were themselves the only parties who suffered from their "rushing," as Miss Caroline Frederica Beauclerk says, "like headstrong fillies," because it would serve to teach them to proceed at a more moderate pace next time; but the evil is, that others, and ladies too, suffer as well as themselves. When they are thrown down on the floor, it not unfrequently happens that they prove a stumbling-block to some "charming young lady," who, before she is aware, falls over them, and is stretched in the same horizontal posture as themselves. A few seasons ago, Lord Larmon had been galloping it at such a rate, that

down he went, and in a moment three others, one of them a young lady, followed his example.

“Accidents” as they are called, from this cause, are not so common as are those which occur from the slipperiness of the floor. In order to give it a polish, it is rubbed over with some French composition, the nature of which I forget; and it matters not much though I do. This composition makes the floor very slippery, and as the gallopade, which more resembles a race than an ordinary dance, is the most common dance at Almack's, it is not surprising that “accidents” should occasionally occur on the floor. Last season, several accidents of this kind took place. The Hon. Miss Lorimer fell one evening with a tremendous crash on the floor, taking with her Lord Covesea, who chanced to have hold of her hand at the moment. Two others, a lady and gentleman, as if envying the fortune of the prostrate couple, immediately reduced themselves to the same level. The prostrate beauties, as if by an undefinable species of sympathy, uttered piercing shrieks as they

lay on the ground. In a moment every mamma and chaperon in the room, whose daughter or charge was not by her side at the time, hurried to the scene of the catastrophe in the utmost alarm. The unfortunate beauties, more frightened than hurt, were promptly raised by the gallantry of those of the opposite sex nearest to them at the time, and after shedding a few tears, all was as much set to rights as if nothing had happened.

Some idea of the gallopade at Almack's will be formed from the following lines by the Hon. Miss Caroline Beauclerk, niece of the Duke of St. Albans, herself one of the best dancers that ever occupied a floor. The poetry is by no means superior, but the picture given of the thing intended to be represented, is rather vivid.

AN ALMACK'S GALLOPADE.

Now Weippert's harp each youthful breast inspires,
A space is clear'd, the dancers take their ground,
Each dancing beau claims her he most admires—
With pleasure here all youthful hearts rebound.

But see the galloppe's graceful, joyous strain,
Makes the red rose mount high in beauty's cheeks,
Old damsels round for partners hunt in vain,
Th' unrivall'd one his favour'd fair one seeks.

Enchanting dance !—the growth of German land --
At thy gay signal fairy feet are flying ;
Soft vows are made, and broke, as hand in hand
The dancers rush in speed each other vying.

Let's mark the num'rous vot'ries of the dance ;—
L—— first rushes like a headstrong filly,
Cranstoun and Walpole may be said to prance,
Smith's so, so,—and ditto, Baron Billie.

E'en envy now is mute at Erskine's grace,
While Hillsborough a Hercules advances ;
Who can cease gazing on Alicia's face,
Till Blackwood smiles, or Fanny Brandling dances.

St. John,—sweet Maynard,—pretty Stanhope glide,
And lively Hill inciting gentle Karr,
Meade and Regina ambling side by side,
In dancing this, are all much on a par.

Oh ! now observe, Maude, Littleton, and Brooke,
Flowers so pure, you'd deem from heav'n they fell,
While N—t—n, queen-like in her very look,
Would make a desert bliss,—a heav'n of hell.

Desperate rush a band of raw recruits,
With ardent minds, and no regard to time—
I beg their pardon, but they are such brutes,
They must excuse my writing such a line.

Hark ! a sound as if from a percussion,
Follow'd by piercing shrieks, arouse our fears ;
Chaperons rise alarm'd, and dread concussion—
A prostrate beauty is dissolv'd in tears.

Think not the prospects of the night are turned,
For a bright vision glances in the ring ;
No sooner is he seen, than all are spurn'd,
They seem his subjects,—he appears their king,

* * * * in whom the gift of dancing lies,
For graceful ease none can with him compare,
“ Swift as an arrow from the shaft he flies ”—
Envied by men, and worshipp'd by the fair.

See him, like the forked lightning flashing,
No ear can catch the sound of his footfall,
Down the room the gallant * * * dashing,
The pride of Almack's—darling of a ball.

All things at length must cease, and so must this ;
I'll end what bumpkins call the gallopade ;
Sweet unmeant speeches pass from Miss to Miss,
All go to flirt, drink tea, and lemonade.

The galloppe's ended, so my lay must stop ;
 As a finale I propose to sing,
 (While love-sick beaux, to belles the question pop,)
 With loyal heart and voice—Long live the King !

Some further information relative to an Almack's dance, will be gleaned from the following lines, which appeared in the "Court Journal" a few years since. It will be seen that particular allusion is made to one of those "falling" occurrences, to which I have referred, as by no means uncommon on the slippery floor of Willis's large room. The lines are headed

A SCENE AT ALMACK'S.

Oh ! let me sing the "sprightly gallopade,"
 Which seems so easy, but which is so hard,—
 At least to dance it well. I do not mean
 To romp it, as, alas ! too often seen.
 Well may mammas and chaperons then exclaim,
 "Why, what a dance ! 'tis really quite a shame
 To suffer it !" but no—I mean the *slide*,
 With which the graceful Danischwild doth glide
 So smoothly o'er the boards. Here let me tell
 The sad mishaps, which Wednesday last befell
 Some young aspirants for the "galloppe's" fame,
 At Almack's ball—but whom ? I must not name.

One round the room his partner safely bears,
 While *one* his ancient war-cry thinks he hears—
 “Charge, Chester! charge!” He *did* at such a pace,
 (Against the ropes,) that falling on his face,
 Quite stunned the hero lay upon the ground,
 His hapless partner too, some gather round;
 While murmurs from the lips of many a beau,
 “Alas! that such a man should fall so low!”
 But while the music in a lively strain
 Strikes up, and dancing recommenced—again
 It ceased, that *two more* might be raised
 From the glib floor, which often they had praised
 For being “smooth and slippery like glass.”
 Ah! little did they think how soon, alas!
 “I would prove their saying—and before
 The dancing ceased, upon that very floor
 Another couple fell. Then, practise, beaux!
 Perhaps you may improve, perhaps—who knows?
 Mind, ere you go again to Almack’s ball
 To gallop well, like some, else not at all!

In reference to the above, the following lines
 were written, under the head of an

ANSWER TO THE SCENE AT ALMACK'S.

Ye spiteful tongues, who deem it well
 To speak the luckless fate of those who fell
 At Almack’s glitt’ring ball,—O! give their due
 To all! and sing the triumph of the gallant two

Who fell, only triumphantly to rise,
Regardless of the smiles of gazing eyes.
No right, indeed, had envious lips to say,
“ Upon the floor” the fallen C—st—r lay,
For lightly springing from the ground,
His trembling partner bearing round,
Again *he* braved the gallopade,
By all allowed to be so hard.
Not so the waltzers—they, (O thoughtless crew !)
Along the slipp’ry boards their way pursue
Till careless of each other’s headlong course,
The couples meet with stunning force—
Their balance lost, down, down the foremost go !
Four prostrate lie ! one luckless *belle* below !
Nor could their fallen spirits soar
Like some ! for *they* could dance no more !
And, C—st—r, had you staid to see *their* fall,
Well might you say,—“ *Waltz* well ! or not at all !”

The gallopade and the waltz are now the only things danced at the Almack’s balls. I have heard the question asked, why is it so ? I have also, let me add, heard it said, in answer to the question, that it is because that if new dances were to be introduced, it would have the effect of “ thinning the floor,” inasmuch as noblemen and others could not “ go through them.” To be sure, there would remain another

alternative: they might go again and get steps from their French dancing-masters; but that alternative would be a troublesome one, and the class of persons who frequent Almack's like to be put to as little trouble as possible. The waltz, therefore, though so severely condemned by every person of moral feeling, and even by persons—witness Lord Byron—whose notions of morality are by no means strict, is the favourite dance at Almack's.

The number of members of Almack's is between 700 and 800. The largest attendance ever known on any one occasion was about 650; which is a number much too great for the size of the room. The average attendance is 500. This was the number present at the concluding ball of last season. It was a fancy ball. Some idea will be formed of one of these balls by the following account of the closing one in July last, drawn up by a gentleman who has witnessed many such splendid scenes:—

“ Wednesday night closed the series of these

splendid balls for the season. As announced, it was a fancy dress ball, and it was of a very brilliant description; about 500 of the nobility and gentry were present.

“ The ladies-patronesses entered the ball-room at an early hour, attired in most splendid costumes, and the display of brilliants we never saw surpassed, even at a birth-day drawing-room. The Marchioness of Londonderry wore a brilliant diadem with *bandeaux* of the same costly jewels *en coiffure*: a tunic of white tulle, embroidered in silver, and a dress of rich white satin, embroidered to correspond; a *ceinture* of costly brilliants. Countess Cowper wore a head-dress of great magnificence, composed of ruby-coloured velvet, the front edged entirely with diamonds and enclosing four brilliant stars, composed of diamonds of great magnitude. The Countess Brownlow, Lady Willoughby D'Eresby, and the other ladies-patronesses, were also attired in most magnificent dresses.

“ The ball-room was thrown open at ten

o'clock, illuminated by a profusion of wax-lights, the orchestra tastefully ornamented with garlands of flowers, and the *tout ensemble* was splendid. The majority of the company appeared in fancy dresses, national costumes, and naval and military uniforms. Included in the company were several foreigners of rank ; amongst the ladies who made their *début* the Princess Galitzin and the Princess Wittycapstein were noticed particularly from the splendour of their costumes and personal attractions.

“ At 11 o'clock, dancing commenced to the music of Collinet's fine quadrille band, led by Nadaud, and including Tolbecque, Remy, Rhode, Hatton, &c., from the King's Theatre. Muzard's quadrilles, “ L'Eclair,” “ Micheline,” and “ La Tete de Bronze,” were finely played, as also the favourite waltzes, “ Le Remede contre le Sommeil,” and others by Strause. A gallopade terminated the dancing, and “ God save the King” closed the balls for the present season.

“ It was after five o'clock next morning before the company* had retired.

* Amongst the company were—

Princes—Galitzin and Wittycapstein.

Princesses—Wittycapstein and Galitzin.

Marquisses—Douglas and De Somery.

Marchionesses—Londonderry and De Salsa.

Earls—Sandwich, Falmouth, Beauchamp, Clonmel, and March.

Countesses—Brownlow, Mansfield, Beauchamp, Chichester, Norbury, Rosse, Oxford, and Cowper.

Lords—Palmerston, Grimston, Ranelagh, Brabazon, Alford, Ridsdale, Loftus, A. Loftus, W. Lennox, F. Beauclerk, Combermere, Dalmeny, Powerscourt, Bridport, Earlsfort, Maynard, A. Paget, H. Vane, Foley, and Leveson.

Ladies—Willoughby D'Eresby, John Russell, Georgiana Russell, C. Cavendish, Hardy, St. John, Gossett, A. Arden, H. Mitchell, G. Fane, Beauchamp Proctor, C. Murray, E. Murray, B. Codrington, A. Poulet Dillon, E. Fielden, Rendlesham, De Clifford, Pringle, Quintin, Ashbrook, Dudley Stuart, Dynevor, M. Cotes, Hatherton, Knightly, E. Palk, E. Smythe, M. Pelham, A. Pelham, Gage, F. Bentinck, S. Kerr, Mildmay, Strutt, C. Dundas, H. Toler, A. Parsons, Scott (2), Bromley, Blackwood, Trollope, and Ponsonby.

Barons—Litzenhern and Wedel Fedberg.

Foreign Counts—Henri de Castella, G. Shovaloff,

“Sets of quadrilles were formed in the course of the evening, by—

The Hon. Spencer Cowper, with the Hon. Miss Maynard.

The Hon. James Howard, with the Hon. Miss Cotton.

The Marquis of Douglas, with Miss Strachan.

The Earl of March, with Miss Codrington.

The Hon. C. Forester, with Miss Beauclerk.

The Hon. W. Ashley, with Miss F. Beauclerk.

A. Esterhazy, Seckendriff, Plessen, Stanislaus, Koskiowski, Jules Koskiowski, D'Ugglass, and Shovaloff.

Sirs—H. Willoughby, E. Codrington, E. Cust, W. B. Proctor, C. Knightly, F. Domville, F. Trench, R. Gordon, W. Brabazon, C. Des Vœux, and E. Cust.

Honourable Messieurs—Cole, C. Cavendish, R. Petre, C. Berkeley, W. Ashley, Granville, Berkeley, C. Forester, Thellusson, C. Edwards, G. Scott, J. Howard, and S. Montagu.

Honourable Mesdames—Petre, Ponsonby, Vansittart, L. Stanhope, W. Ashley, John Gage, G. Berkeley, Tollemache, Law, and Thellusson.

Honourable Misses—Willoughby, Somerset (2), St. John, Rice (2), E. King, Mitchell, Cotton, Dillon, Thellusson, Flower, Maude, Littleton, Gage (2), Hood, G. Kinnaird, Maynard, &c.

“The two latter young ladies wore elegant costumes, as Spanish Flower Girls.”

Perhaps there is no instance on record in the history of the world, of such an assemblage of beauty as is exhibited at the most numerous attended balls at Almack's. At drawing rooms and queen's levees there may be more of the fair sex present; but then rank alone is the qualification for admission to these; while the resolution adopted by the ladies-patronesses of Almack's, of not admitting more than three of a family to their balls, affords them an excuse for excluding any persons they think fit. And they generally do make a point of preferring beauties to “horrid creatures.” In fact, however much they may differ on other matters, they are quite unanimous in this, that “quizzes”—which translated into more intelligible English, means ugly girls—are by all means to be kept out of Almack's. I need not add that the intrinsic charms of the female frequenters of Almack's are greatly heightened by their splendid dresses and the magnificent appearance of the room.

Of these dresses I say nothing, because I cannot describe them. That is not in my way. Judging from the specimen which Mr. W., the author of a late popular work, afforded of his abilities in describing ladies' costumes, in the case of some of our female nobility, there is no doubt he would excel in "pencilling" the ladies' dresses at Almack's. I, however, have not the honour of being Mr. W., nor have I the happiness of possessing his talents—not certainly, at least, in this particular department of literature. I therefore content myself—I *must* do so—with saying, that altogether the scene is, indeed, perfectly dazzling: to foreigners who have seen nothing of the kind it is sometimes quite overpowering. Provincial papers in reviewing the Annuals, usually say, that the contents, both in poetry and prose, are all so meritorious that they do not know "which to select:" I have often thought that young noblemen and others who may be contemplating "a match" must be pretty much in the same predicament when examining the female "contents" of Almack's on

one of the ball nights. They are *all* beautiful, as the same journalists say. If there were only a sprinkling of beauties, as is the case in most miscellaneous assemblages of women, in the higher as well as in the humbler walks of life, then a male candidate for matrimonial bliss would have little difficulty in making his choice: but how are you to make up your mind where there are, perhaps, a couple of hundred marriageable ladies before you, *all* lovely—*so* lovely—*so equally* lovely, that you cannot for the life of you say which is the loveliest! If the ass starved between the two bundles of hay, owing to his not being able to decide which had the preferable claim on his stomach, is it to be wondered that a poor young fellow who meditates matrimony, should hesitate when he sees two hundred eligible ladies before him, whose personal claims are so equally poised? He feels precisely in the situation of Macheath in the “Beggar’s Opera” of Gray. He ejaculates to himself, “How happy could I be with either,—were the other dear charmers away!” I could ne-

ver find any excuse for Lord Eldon doubting for years as to how he should decide certain Chancery cases which came before him : had his lordship come to Almack's to choose a wife, I should not have quarrelled with him had he doubted till doomsday. Almack's, I fear—and I do not wonder at it—will have to answer for making many a man a bachelor for life, who, perhaps, had he never set foot in it, would, like most other men, have sobered himself down in wedlock. The scene has bewildered him : he did not know which of the beauties to choose, and therefore made no choice at all. He admired them *all* a great deal too much to do the others an injustice by “buckling with *one*.”

You would suppose from the soft and smiling countenances you see everywhere around you, that there were nothing but simplicity and happiness in the bosoms of all present. Could you read those bosoms, whether of old or young, you would come to a very different conclusion. The mothers and chaperons dressed, as one of the Misses Beauclerks would say, in their “regula-

tion" satin robes, with their velvet or crape hats, "ornamented" with waving plumes of feathers, are severally putting their ingenuity to the rack to "hook" some elder son with a title and a good rent-roll for their "loves" of daughters, or for girls committed to their charge. These antiquated ladies, with "rouged faces and false frontlets," have, it must be admitted, a very difficult game to play. They have not only to get "the girls" in the way of the "prizes," but they have to keep them out of the way of the detrimentials. Their minds, from the moment they enter the ball-room to the time of quitting it, are occupied with the one thought of how the evil may be avoided and the good attained. Their pleasure or pain, therefore, depends entirely on how far they fancy they succeed or fail in this great object. Perhaps they see some rival mamma, or chaperon, supplanting them; their envy and mortification in that case are indescribable. If they are successful in entangling in their meshes some "suitable" youth, then they are envied by others in their turn. I

wish it were possible to see what bitter animosity, what deadly dislike towards each other, two rival mothers or chaperons can conceal under a fair exterior. But besides these sources of uneasiness and anxiety to those elderly ladies who have "lovely creatures" on their hand at Almack's, and are desirous of transferring the burden to some elder unmarried son, there are a thousand little things which are unknown to all but themselves. To get a conspicuous place in the ball-room in which to station themselves—a place at which young Miss may display her charms to advantage, is often no easy matter. Care is to be taken that the lady beside which "my daughter" sits be not dressed in such a way as to impair the effect of her personal attractions. "My dear," said the Marchioness of Gardentown, on the last night but one of Almack's last season, just as Miss was pointing out to "mamma" a particular place at which she thought they might be comfortably seated; "My dear, you must not sit beside that horrid old creature, the Duchess Dowager of Longbride; she wears

such a profusion of pink and yellow, that it will make you look *so* pale." "Jemima, my love, why don't you show a little more animation in dancing with Lord Budget," said the Countess of Leuchars, on a late occasion, to her second daughter, just as she had re-seated herself after quitting the floor. If "my love" be seen speaking to a detrimental, "mamma," or the lady who plays chaperon, is within a few removes of hysterics. But we shall never be able to form any idea of the sources of misery there are to those who have young ladies to dispose of, even in Almack's—all happy as the former appear to be—until we are favoured with a faithful mental autobiography of some intelligent chaperon.

With regard to the young ladies, again, who are to be seen at Almack's, there is immeasurably more misery among them than the superficial observer would believe. One who does not look below the surface would infer from their smiling faces, the lightness of their step in the dance, and the general gaiety of their appearance, that if there be happiness in the world

they must be the possessors of it. Could those who think so prevail on any half dozen of them to give a candid statement of their feelings, from the time they entered Willis's Rooms until the coach was called, they would see how far they were wide of the real state of the case. None but young misses themselves can form any conception of the misery which, on such occasions, is caused to them by seeing attentions paid by the male sex to their rivals. A single look or smile from the object of a young lady's affections to some other young lady, is like plunging a dagger into the bosom of the former. It is also a prolific source of misery to young ladies when they see families of distinction paying more attention to some of their acquaintances than is paid to themselves. It is well known in certain circles that one young lady has almost broken her heart because an acquaintance was repeatedly asked to dance by noblemen of consideration, while she was suffered to occupy a seat by her mother's side the whole night. For one young lady to hear the charms of another

young lady, with whom she is on visiting terms, warmly praised, is of all punishments the worst you could inflict. It may be, again, that "the loved one" is not among the number of noblemen and gentlemen present, and that her mind is wandering in foreign climes after the object of her affections. What is Almack's, with all its glitter and glare, to such a person? It is no better than a wilderness. To her ears the music has no charms; the dance no attractions. She has no sympathy with those around her. She would feel herself as much in society among an equal number of those "composition" ladies who grace a hairdresser's window. The severe remarks which young ladies make on each other at Almack's sufficiently prove how unhappy some of them are while there. There is a malignity in some of these remarks, which one might in vain search for elsewhere, and which painfully contrasts with the lovely countenances and snow-like bosoms of those who make them. I once heard the Rev. Thomas Dale, a popular poet as well as divine,

say, that there is many a bosom encased in silks and satins which is as hard as the very stones of the street on which the parties tread. Could the rev. gentleman inspect the bosoms of the beauties of Almack's, he would find too many proofs of the justness of his observation.

But this is an ungrateful topic, and therefore I will dwell on it no longer. Four o'clock is the usual hour at which the ball begins to break up; but the dance is often prolonged till five. In June and July the sun sometimes shines into the ball-room, and impairs the effect of the artificial lights which shone so brilliantly throughout the night. Poor, indeed, is the appearance of these lights, when they have to compete with their rising rival of the east; and equally poor is the appearance of the beauties who remain till so late an hour, compared with what it was while darkness was over the face of the earth, and the profusion of lights in the ball-room shone with undiminished splendour. The rosy hues which, but a few hours before mantled their cheeks, are now, as a gifted authoress, in a poetical piece of

exquisite beauty, says when speaking of the effects of death, "fled like fancy's dream." Now the countenances of the fair are, to use the phraseology of an old Scotch song, "pale and wan." The lingering beauties themselves have not only lost all colour, but all animation; they are little better than so many lifeless statues; Nor does their dress appear to the same advantage as before; one soon discovers many little blemishes in their finery, which the glare of the wax-lights only served to conceal. It is bad policy for young ladies to remain longer at Almack's, or at any other ball, than four o'clock in the morning. They may rely upon it, that no one ever fell in love with them after that hour. I appeal to the married ladies who have been to Almack's, whether their husbands proposed to them after the hour of four o'clock in the morning. Not one, I am certain, could answer me in the affirmative. If the truth were known, I doubt not it would be found that many a young lady has dissolved the spell which had before bound her lover to her, by allowing him

to see her faded charms after four in the morning. A beauty "fagged to death," as young ladies themselves say, by the fatigues of dancing and the want of sleep, is in a much more unfit condition for being seen, though in her ball-dress, than she would be in her morning's dishabille.

Such is Almack's. And is this the place—the far-famed place—some one will say, of which we hear so much, but whose proceedings are enshrouded in so much secrecy? It is indeed. And it is to gain admission to this place, that such great and anxious efforts are made by so many families. I stated in the beginning of the chapter, that the importance of Almack's arises from the supreme power it exercises over the world of fashion. It will be asked, how came a half-dozen ladies to acquire the power of making or unmaking whole families by a single word, just as their caprice may dictate? Like all other unlimited sovereignties, it was of gradual growth. It began, as before mentioned, by four ladies starting, nearly a century since, a sort of female club. The aristocracy of that period became

members of the association ; and the decisions of the directresses, or committee of management, were acquiesced in. As the number of members increased, they became more and more particular as to the persons they admitted. Other ladies-patronesses of distinction, succeeded the originators of Almack's, and they by degrees assumed new powers, the exercise of which was submitted to by the higher classes.

n this way Almack's has risen to its present importance and weight in the fashionable world, no one ever having made a successful attack on the administration of its affairs. It is a despotism which fills some of the highest families in the kingdom with fear and trembling. There are thousands whose joy at its overthrow would be unbounded ; but still every one shrinks from the idea of an open and vigorous effort to accomplish so desirable an object.

It has been the fate of Almack's to be attacked from all quarters. I have spoken of the abuse heaped on the institution, and on the ladies-patronesses for the time being, by those who

have been refused admission. The attacks of such parties are natural enough. The fox pronounced the grapes to be sour, when he could not reach them. But what is surprising is, that a work which, for nearly a quarter of a century, has been the strenuous defender of everything aristocratic, should make a dead set at an institution the most thoroughly exclusive that ever existed in this country. Who could ever have believed that such a passage as the following could by possibility have found its way into the "Quarterly Review?" Yet so it is. It appeared a few months since in that journal, and went the round of the newspapers :—

“The rise of Almack's (an exclusive fashionable dancing assembly at the west end of London) may serve to illustrate the mode in which this sort of empire was consolidated. A few pretty women, not in the highest rank of the nobility, met at Devonshire House to practise quadrilles, then recently imported from the Continent. The establishment of a subscription ball was suggested, to which none but the very *élite*

were to be admissible; the subscription to be low, with the view of checking the obtrusive vulgarity of wealth. The fancy took, and when it transpired that the patronesses had actually refused a most estimable English duchess, all London became mad to be admitted; exclusion was universally regarded as a positive loss of caste, and no arts of solicitation were left untried to avert so horrible a catastrophe. The wives and daughters of the oldest provincial gentry, with pedigrees traced up to the Hep-tarchy, have been seen humbling themselves, by the lowest acts of degradation, to soften the obdurate autocratesses. The fancy has gradually abated, and the institution is now tottering to its fall; but its origin is worth recording, as a ludicrous phenomenon-in the progress of society."

Had any one seen this paragraph in the course of its journeyings round the newspaper press, without the appendage "Quarterly Review" to it, he would have at once concluded that it must have originally graced the columns of "The

Poor Man's Guardian," "Cleave's Police Gazette," or some other of the then unstamped. "The Quarterly," however, in its anxiety to destroy Almack's, falls into one or two misstatements. It is not correct to say that it is now tottering to its fall. The number of members, which, as I have before stated, is between 700 and 800, is greater than at any former period, and the thing is carried on with as much spirit as ever. The same anxiety to obtain admission still exists, and it is those only who have been unsuccessful in their applications, who endeavour to cry the institution down. The probability is, that the attack in question by "The Quarterly," emanates from some such disappointed party.

Their high mightinesses, the ladies-patronesses, have inflicted a world of pain on thousands of individuals, and have made whole families miserable for life by their arbitrary and harsh decrees. The poor African slave does not quail and tremble more under the apprehension of the lash of his tyrant master, than do many of the

first families in the land at the bare idea of being refused admittance to Almack's. It is no secret—it is not so, at least, in certain circles—that some time ago an amiable young lady of high birth and excellent connexions, actually died of a broken heart, because the cabal in King-street, for reasons best known to themselves, rejected her application for a subscription to Almack's. It is added, that her physician, having ascertained the cause of her illness, took occasion to submit the case to the empresses of fashion, when one day assembled in full divan, appealing at the same time to their humanity for the admission of the young lady; but, as the story goes, without effect. The decree had gone forth that she should be excluded, and there was no reversal.

People talk of monopolies: will any one point me out a monopoly so monstrous as this? It will be asked, why then not abolish it? But how, let me ask in return, is that to be done? It is a system far more close, and despotic, and oppressive to the fashionable world, than the political

system which prevailed before the passing of the Reform Bill, was to the people generally; but the evil is, that you cannot well reach it by legislative acts. Strictly speaking, it is one with which Parliament cannot properly interfere; there is no law which it infringes; it is just as legal as any other society or club which is known to exist. But even suppose some legislator, who had himself been shut out from Almack's by the high behests of the half dozen tyrants in petticoats, were to make a proposition to put it down, how, think you, would such a proposition be received in either House? Why, the dandies in both Houses, headed by the Earl of Falmouth in the one, and by the Hon. Grantley Berkeley in the other, would rise *en masse* to put an extinguisher upon it. It would not be entertained for a moment. The ladies-patronesses have too many friends in both Houses for that.

The question again recurs, how is this nuisance in high life to be abated? That is the very question which of all others I cannot answer. I can see no probability of its being put

down but by some serious disagreement among the ladies-patronesses themselves. It is a scriptural adage, that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Let the genius of discord be fairly introduced among their ladyships, so as to induce three or four of them to resign at once, and you put an immediate extinguisher on Almack's. I see no other probable way by which the thing can be done.

Since the above was written, the name of the Countess of Lichfield has been added to the list of ladies-patronesses, again making the number seven.

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL OPINIONS.

Tories—Whigs—Radicals—Destructives—Proceedings at meetings of the Destructives—Scenes at their public dinners—General remarks.

It may at first sight appear difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain with any degree of accuracy the comparative numbers of Tories, Whigs and Radicals, in a city containing so extensive a population as does the metropolis of this country. It is undoubtedly true, that some years ago no computation could have been made of the relative number of these different parties, which could have been depended on as constituting an approximation to [the truth. The

case, however, is different now. The passing of the Reform Bill, conferring the elective franchise on every householder in the metropolis who occupies premises of a ten-pound yearly rental, has furnished us with data by which the state of public opinion on political subjects in London may be placed beyond all doubt. As the metropolis is, for elective purposes, divided into the city of London, the city of Westminster, and the five burghs, we have only to examine the state of the poll at these various places, when any disputed election has been brought to a close, to ascertain the number of Tories and Whigs; for it is to be observed, that as there is scarcely a single Tory or Whig among the lower classes, those holding either set of opinions are almost all householders. Taking, then, in the first place, the aggregate number of persons who have of late years polled in the Tory interest, in the various districts into which the metropolis is divided, I should estimate that number at 20,000; if to these be added 5,000 more, for young men in respectable situations, who are only

lodgers, and have consequently no vote, it will give a total of 25,000 ; and this, I am confident, is above rather than below the number. The existing metropolitan Tories, however, it is but justice to observe, are morally strong if numerically weak. They are all Tories from principle ; not from interest, or from fashion, as used to be the case ; and their decided attachment to their principles, and the sacrifices they make for them, though hitherto unable to defeat the Liberal party in the contests which take place for the representation of the metropolis, have a great direct influence on the representation of the country, and on the legislation of the senate. The city of London has its Conservative club ; Westminster has its Conservative club ; and the different boroughs, with the exception, I believe, of the Tower Hamlets, have severally their Conservative clubs. Then there is the Carlton Club. The Tories are thus closely banded together, and co-operate with each other, with a cordiality unknown among the Liberal

party. In this way they not only set an example of union and enterprise to the Tories throughout the kingdom, but their leaders in the various districts of the metropolis meet together whenever any emergency arises, and concert measures for defeating the Liberal party in all parts of the country. No sooner does a vacancy occur in the representation of any town or county throughout the United Kingdom, than a meeting takes place among the metropolitan Tories, to consider the propriety of starting one of their own party against the candidate in the Liberal interest. If determined on, after mature deliberation, that their cause is to be subserved by putting up a Tory candidate, the thing is done in an instant; and so complete is the machinery which they bring to bear on the contest, that all of a sudden you see as much harmony and zeal and activity on the part of the Tory electors, as if the thing were the result of a long premeditated and carefully concerted local plan. The London Tories are unquestionably entitled

to the credit of being admirable tacticians; the Liberals compared with them are mere novices in the science of tactics.

The Whigs are not nearly so numerous in the metropolis as the Tories. Judging from the results of elections in which there have been Tory, Whig, and Radical candidates, I should estimate the number of genuine Whig householders, as not exceeding 15,000. In Marylebone and Finsbury, we have had Whig candidates along with those in the Tory and Radical interests, and the state of the poll as regards the Whigs on these occasions has been such as to justify me in not giving them credit for a higher number than that I have just mentioned. As nearly as I can compute, from a somewhat intimate knowledge of the opinions which prevail among lodgers, filling respectable situations, I should set down the number of Whigs of this class, as being about 5,000, making the entire number of genuine metropolitan Whigs 20,000. Of themselves, therefore, they are a helpless party. Inferior to the Tories in number, they are

immeasurably inferior to them in point of talent, tactics, and activity. But for the Radicals coming to their aid, not one of them could ever have the good fortune to cross the threshold of office, not even though it were only to be unceremoniously kicked out again. Few of them, indeed, without the assistance of their Radical allies, would find their way to St. Stephen's. In their hearts they thoroughly despise the Radicals, though to them they owe their existence as a party. Are the Radicals then to be blamed for supporting the Whigs? Certainly not; they only act in supporting them, as men of the world. They are only reducing to practice their favourite maxim of "half a dinner is better than no dinner." The Radicals, in supporting the Whigs, are perfectly aware of what they are about; they see quite clearly the game they are playing. Nothing could exceed the contempt they entertain towards the Whigs in their hearts: they think the Tories a far more honourable and consistent class of politicians; but then they know that while from the Tories they can get

nothing they ask, they can, by the necessary quantum of kicking and bullying, get from the Whigs half the amount of their demand on account, and afterwards the other half when the process of kicking and bullying and abusing, has been carried on for a certain length of time. The Whigs, therefore, whether as representatives or as ministers, are, to all intents and purposes, under the government of the Radicals, and as the latter know that nothing is to be made of their Whiggish friends by persuasion or coaxing, they resort to the only other mode of government within their reach, namely, the government of the whip, which they lay on in true Radical style.

With the exception of those who have no political opinions at all, I would class the remainder of the male population of the metropolis under the comprehensive head of Radicals. Among those who have no political opinions whatever, are the great body of the labouring Irish. I should think there are at least 50,000 Irishmen in London not in the way of reading

newspapers; for this good reason—that they cannot. The subject of politics is, therefore, to such persons, necessarily unknown and unthought of. There are, perhaps, 40,000 or 50,000 English labouring men, including cabmen, hackney-coachmen, draymen, and persons pursuing other such humble callings, who have never troubled their heads about politics; making altogether about 100,000 grown-up men in London who have no political opinions at all. But after this deduction has been made, in addition to the deductions for Tories and Whigs, the number of Radicals in the metropolis will be found sufficiently formidable. Making due allowances for women and children, who, of course, are always included in any statement of the supposed population of London, I should think the number of Radicals in the metropolis—of genuine intelligent Radicals—is not under 300,000; and I am confident that, if at a time of great political excitement the leaders of the party were to make it known to them, that the only test which could be admitted of

their devotion to their principles, would be their signing a certain Radical petition or other document, that number of signatures, with the requisite canvassing, would be adhibited to it in the course of eight days. It is only a few years, since upwards of 100,000 individuals, journeymen only in particular trades, enrolled their names as members of a union, which, however it may have been attempted to be concealed, was, beyond all question, a political union. The number of Radicals, however, possessing the elective franchise, is but limited. It is in the aggregate less than that of either the Whigs or Tories, though in some districts, the Finsbury district for example, it is greater. Hence the Radicals are unable, with one or two exceptions, to return to Parliament men who will "go the whole hog." Were we, however, to have universal suffrage, or were the suffrage to be much more extended than it now is, the metropolitan representatives would be, to a man, thoroughgoing Radicals. Sir Samuel Whalley thinks he goes "far and fast enough;" in the supposed

contingency he would find himself miserably mistaken. He and Mr. Bulwer would assuredly be displaced by Messrs. Murphy and Savage. In the other districts the present members would be also obliged to give way to regular levellers—men who would scatter the Constitution to the winds of heaven, and whose only law, as in the case of the French Revolution, would be their own capricious and despotic will. The usual process of making or administering the laws would be infinitely too slow for them; they would make and administer them with the rapidity of steam.

The Radicals are divided into various sections. There are the moderate Radicals, the ultra Radicals, and the Destructives. Among the first class there are a great many men of superior intelligence, great talent, and undoubted integrity of character, both in their public and private capacities. Among the ultra Radicals, there are also many honest men. The late Major Cartwright was one instance, and I look on the present Mr. Murphy as another. There

are also, perhaps, a few well-meaning, though mistaken, persons among the Destructives; but they are nearly as rare as black swans. How many of them, were they applying for situations requiring integrity and trustworthiness, could have, as the servants of all-work who advertise for places in "The Times," say, "an undeniable character," from any honest person who knows them! He must be a poor arithmetician who could not count the number. The loudest brawlers for reform at Destructive meetings, are precisely the men who stand in most need of reform themselves. They talk big about repairing the Constitution—let them look at home; their own characters stand fully as much in need of tinkering as the Constitution. When the Constitution is damaged to as great an extent, things will indeed have come to a pretty pass, and the sooner we pack up and quit the country the better. What are the leading Destructive declaimers in the metropolis? He who would write their biography faithfully, would be doing a service to his country of much

greater magnitude than many of those services which have procured for the persons performing them, a corner in St. Paul's. They are, almost to a man, individuals who have proved themselves the worst members of society. Ask their wives, or grown-up children, what they are; let their servants speak to their character; get the opinion of those who have had any dealings with them; or, best of all, hear, when they fall out among themselves, what they say of each other. "Set a thief," says the proverb, "to catch a thief." On the same principle, set a rogue to describe a rogue. "He best can paint it who has felt it most." I have had occasion to see many a split between the most noted rogues of the Destructive school. And what a picture on such occasions has the one drawn of the other! I had hoped too well of human nature to allow me to suppose there could be so much blackness and baseness in its composition, as they have ascribed to each other. In the borough of Marylebone, within a few yards of the house in which I then resided, two parties of Destructives

who chanced to have "a regular split," held a meeting on parish matters a short time since. There happened to be two public-houses directly opposite each other, and each party engaged one for the purpose of annoying the other. I sat at the window upwards of three hours enjoying the scene; and a richer one was never perhaps witnessed. The portraitures the leaders drew of each other, were taken partly by means of an oratorical pencil, and partly by means of a symbolical one. The parties made a distinction between each other, by the one adopting the name of the Yellows, and the other that of the Blues. Timothy Tagrag was the hero and leader of the Yellows, and Richard Ragamuffin* was the self-elected champion of the Blues. Timothy, amidst the cheers of his own party and the groans of the "adverse faction," as he called them, commenced the day's proceedings by the most virulent abuse of Ragamuffin. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Tagrag, looking at his own party, the Blues,

* These were the names by which the opposing leaders called each other.

or the "crew" as they were designated by the Yellows; "Gentlemen, you see opposite you one of the most unprincipled of men. Ragamuffin is guilty of every crime under heaven. He is a tyrant to his wife; not content with allowing her and his children to starve while he is indulging in his cups, and in something worse, he behaves like a brute to her on his return home, which is never before two or three o'clock in the morning. He is always drunk when he comes home, and his usual practice is, the moment he gets into his wife's bed-room, to beat her in the most furious manner. [Groans from Timothy's party, and "It's all a —" from the other.] It was only last year he paid his creditors three-farthings in the pound. No servant could ever remain longer than two days in the house with such a person. He is worse than a monster; he delights in the misery of his fellow-creatures. He would drink his glass of gin-and-water with peculiar zest, though he saw all London in a flame. [Renewed groans from the Yellows, mingled with exclamations of "You know, Dick, you're the

greatest — in Marylebone,” from the Blues.]
Gentlemen, he never had a friend on earth whom he did not betray. He would sell his country for a quartern of gin. [Laughter and cheers from the Yellows, with groans from the Blues.] I defy any one to name a vice of which this person is not guilty: if any of you can invent a new one, he will be the first to commit it. I would earnestly caution those who have wives and daughters, never on any account to suffer him to cross their threshold. Were an action of damages to be brought against him for all his crimes of a certain kind, every big wig in the metropolis would have a case for himself. The instances in which he has seduced innocent unsuspecting girls, are innumerable. Such, gentlemen, is the character of the person who has the consummate effrontery to oppose us on this occasion; but the animal has no shame; if he had the smallest particle, he would never have the audacity, covered as he knows himself to be with crimes of the deepest dye, to hold up his face in society, much less aspire at the direc-

tion of the affairs of this parish. What the end of such a person will be, it needs not the gift of prophecy to foretell. Gentlemen, you see—[here a dead kitten, projected from the opposite side, interrupted the speaker by alighting on his mouth,]—Gentlemen, I was about to say, when thus rudely interrupted by one of the Ragamuffins over the way, that any one with half an eye may see this fellow's destiny written on his forehead. [Here one of Tagrag's party hoisted out at one of the windows a miniature gallows, with an effigy of Ragamuffin suspended from it.] Yes, gentlemen," continued Tagrag, "you are well aware—[here the speaker looked earnestly at the effigy]—of what the end of this monster will be, without my telling you."* [Loud cheers from the Tagragians, and groans and hisses from the Ragamuffins.]

It now became Ragamuffin's turn to address

* As this may appear to persons unacquainted with the parties to smack of caricature, it may be right to say that the Destructives in question actually used much coarser language towards each other, than I can with propriety transfer to my pages.

the meeting. He was greeted on rising with rapturous applause by his own party, and assailed with tremendous hisses by the other. "Gentlemen," said he—meaning his own party of course—"Gentlemen, this fellow, in the charges, the unfounded charges—[Loud laughter and cries of 'Oh! Oh!'] from the Tagragians—he has brought against me, has sketched his own character to a hair. He himself is the *great* original of his picture. His own conscience tells him he is guilty of everything of which he has accused me. Gentlemen, I beg your pardon for speaking of his conscience; the man never had a conscience. No man possessing anything in the shape of a conscience, could ever have contemplated, much less committed, the enormities of which the person, who has dared to insult you by opening his polluted mouth in your presence, is guilty. [Loud cheers from the Blues, with tremendous groans from the Yellows.] Will the man answer me this question? Did he not say, in Mr. Savage's tap-room, one day last week, when he and Dr. Wade

were gulping a pot of heavy wet, that if he had the management of the poor, he would take the shine out of them by keeping them on starvation allowance? [The groans from the Ragamuffins were here deafening, and even the Tagragians looked unutterable things at each other, having themselves the prospect of the workhouse before them. 'It's all a —,' shouted Mr. Tagrag.] He says, gentlemen, it's all a —. That's very easy said, and it's just such language as might be expected from him; but will anybody believe him? [Loud cries of 'No, no,' from the Ragamuffins.] Gentlemen, you see before you, in the opposite window, the man who swindled poor Widow Brewer, and her five small children, out of the last six-pence they possessed. You see a man who, like the tyrant of old, in regard to the people of Rome, could wish that you had only one neck among you, that he might, by breaking that neck, extinguish you at once. There has been a manifest mistake with respect to the age and country which brought the fellow into existence. It is clear that Fate intended him to have

been a countryman, a contemporary, and companion of Robespierre, and the other blood-thirsty monsters of the French Revolution. [Loud cheers from the Ragamuffins, answered by vehement hisses from the Tagragians.] He has his good fortune, and not his merits, gentlemen, to thank, that he has not already stood on a certain eminence off Ludgate-hill, with a halter round his neck. Ask him, gentlemen, whether he knows any one who gave his wife a blue eye last week, and nearly broke his eldest daughter's leg with a chair, because she interposed to prevent her father striking her mother. [Loud cries of 'Shame, shame!' from the Ragamuffins, and a dead silence on the part of the Tagragians.] Why, will you believe it, gentlemen, this person has been through the Insolvent Debtor's Court five times within the last twelve years? Ask him what he has done with the short weights with which, until detected, he was in the habit of cheating his customers when purchasing his coals? [Mr. Tagrag was, at the period I refer to, though not now, a potato mer-

chant.] Ask him"—[Here a rotten potato from the opposite side hit the speaker such a hard whack on the forehead, as made the remainder of the sentence, like Macbeth's 'Amen,' stick in his throat.] After a short pause he resumed,—"That rotten potato, gentlemen, is an appropriate emblem of himself—his soul is rotten—his body is rotten—he is rotten all over, as those who now support him will discover ere long. [Cries from the Ragamuffins of 'That they will.'] I was about, when brutally interrupted by one of the blackguard gang on the opposite side, to request you to ask the man who has the reckless impudence to oppose us this day, what he did with the forty odd pounds, which he collected six months ago from the parishioners, under the pretext that it was to defray the expenses incurred in endeavouring to defeat a Tory stratagem, got up by that party against the interests of the rate-payers. Gentlemen, there is no use in mincing matters with a person whose soul is as black as the coals, or rather the slates, he sells. I therefore charge him before

you all, with pocketing every farthing of that sum. [Most Stentorian groans from the Ragamuffins.] It was no later than last Wednesday that this brazen-faced fellow was found, at one o'clock in the morning, rolling in the mud opposite the door of a well-known house, in a state of the most beastly intoxication, and presenting the appearance of a person who had been wallowing for hours in the dubs. Had he lain there one moment longer he would have been run over, and had his body smashed to pieces by one of the large carts of Whitbread & Co. [A voice from the Ragamuffin party, 'What a pity he escaped!'] Why, certainly, gentlemen, the world would have been at no loss, though the brewer's cart had let his soul out of him, and this parish would have had eternal cause of rejoicing; but I should have been sorry, nevertheless, had the fellow made his exit in that way. I fancy I hear you ask me why? Why, for this good reason—that I hope to have the happiness of seeing a well-known public character close his career, by causing his donkey heels to dangle

in the air. [Thunders of applause from the Ragamuffins, with tremendous groans from the Tagragians.] Gentlemen, the character of this person is so bad, that no one ought to approach within a dozen yards of him; he is a libel on our species. Not only does he commit crimes which would make other men bury themselves in the earth, but he openly boasts of them. He glories, gentlemen, in the most frightful immoralities of which a human being can be guilty; immoralities, the mere mention of which would cause a thrill of horror in every bosom now present; and yet this person can have the surpassing effrontery to ascend the hustings at public meetings, and prate and brawl about virtue! Yes, gentlemen, will you believe it?—about *his* virtue! Should he succeed in—[Here a loud shout of laughter from the Tagragians drowned the remainder of the sentence. It was caused by a large placard being exhibited at the moment from their window, with the words written on it, ‘Four-pence in the pound, Rag,’ which was the amount of the speaker’s latest composition with

his creditors:] I was about to say, gentlemen, that if this man—[Here again the voice of the orator was completely lost, amidst a burst of laughter, mingled with three successive volleys of cheers, which proceeded from the opposite party. The cause of their merriment was the exhibition at the window of a board containing a quantity of cat's-meat, he being a butcher, and being often reproached with selling meat of so bad a quality, as to be little better than the cat's-meat which is called from door to door in the streets.] Gentlemen, what I was about to say is this—and with it I will close—that if this person and his creatures—[‘Vy don’t you say *varmint* at once?’ shouted a sturdy Ragamuffin.] Well, then, varman be it. If, I say, they succeed in their object this day, that will be the greatest calamity that ever befel this parish; but I am sure we shall defeat them.” [Immense applause from the Ragamuffins, and loud groans from the Tagragians.]

The majority of the Destructives who figure, to use one of their own favourite phrases, at

‘Tibbald’s Road,’ the Rotunda, &c., are, I do in sober seriousness think, the most reckless and unprincipled class of persons to be found in the metropolis. I could unfold tales, the truth of which I have no reason to doubt, respecting the conduct of some of them, which would startle anybody but their followers. With individuals, however, I have nothing to do. My observations apply to bodies of men. Let me not, even in speaking of the Destructives in the mass, employ an expression which would do any one, though it were but by implication, injustice. Those who mix much with the class of politicians of whom I am speaking, must, from the conduct of the great body of them, be forcibly reminded of Dr. Johnson’s remark, “that the greatest rogues always seek refuge in patriotism.”

My curiosity has often led me to attend Destructive meetings, where the leading demagogues were, on the Peachum and Lockit principle, agreed, at least ostensibly, among themselves. On such occasions, I have generally been amused with their lofty pretensions to

virtue. They talk of themselves as if they were deities, and engage that, if the government of the country were confided to them, they would at once make Great Britain the scene of a political and social millennium.

It is no less amusing to contrast their assumed importance at these meetings with their limited numbers and still more limited moral influence. The story of the three tailors of Tooley Street, who commenced their petition with "We the people of England," is known to every one. The same farce was exhibited every Tuesday evening in the winter of 1835, in a well-known political house in Marylebone. Some thirty or forty individuals weekly assembled there, to smoke a pipe, to drink their glass of gin-and-water, or pint of porter, and discuss the affairs of the state. They dignified themselves with the name of "The Great Radical Association of England," made their speeches, passed their resolutions, and, night after night, threatened to exterminate the House of Lords, and scatter the Commons in all directions, if they did not obey

their mandates, and pass those measures which they thought proper to recommend. . . . Nothing could exceed the pompousness of their proceedings in so far as regarded the matter and manner of their speeches. Had a person been conducted blindfold into the "great hall" where the "Great Radical Association of England" was holding their meeting, and had no other means of information as to the real state of matters than what was afforded him through the medium of his ears, he would have thought there was something truly formidable in the composition and proceedings of such an assemblage. He would have heard them making and re-making constitutions and ministries "in less than no time," as one of themselves once observed. Had he been suddenly restored to the privilege of sight, the illusion, to be sure, would have been at once dispelled. He would have seen, perhaps, in the chair, a journeyman carpenter, whose beard had been guiltless of any intercourse with a razor for eight days—whose wardrobe had more holes than whole cloth in it—and whose frontispiece presented the

appearance of that of a chimney-sweep after the first water on May-day. On the platform, on the right hand of the chairman, was invariably to be seen a little pot-bellied man, called Jim Rogers, smoking a pipe and cheering the speaker. This four-feet-six of patriotic mortality was altogether an unique character. He was never to be seen without his porter before him, a "swig" of which he took at regular intervals of five minutes each, always preceding the draught by loud cries of "Hear, hear, hear!" The last sound, indeed, invariably died away in the utensil as he put it to his mouth; and as he withdrew it again to insert his pipe in its place, his countenance gleamed with a smile of so peculiar a nature that I am sure the most skilful physiognomist would be puzzled to know in what classification to place it. If I have succeeded in realising to myself the particular kind of smile which Milton had in his mind's eye when he spoke of the "ghastly smile" of his fallen angel, I should say that that of Jim Rogers' was not of the same genus. I incline rather to the opinion that it ap-

proximated nearer to the smile or grin, whichever you like to call it, of the celebrated cobbler mentioned by Addison in one of his 'Spectators.' It is worthy of remark that Jim never spoke himself; he was too much occupied with his pipe and porter, and the cheering of the other orators, to play the Demosthenes in his own person. You never missed our little patriot from his post; he was the first in the "great hall," and the last to leave it. As he used to say himself, no man should ever find him "a traatir" to his country. His compatriots were not so regular in their attendance. Sometimes you saw one set of orators on the platform, and at other times another. In the body of the room, the Destructive assemblage was of as motley a character as if all London had been polled for the purpose of making it so. Each person was a character by himself. There were, however, three features common to them all—they all smoked their pipes, drank their porter or their gin-and-water, and, with the exception of the aforesaid Jim Rogers, played the orator. They all, too, concurred in lamenting the degeneracy of the

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times, bewailed the lack of patriots, as proved by their thin attendance; and were most liberal in abusing the Whigs and Tories. The proceedings usually occupied about three hours. Before one hour had elapsed the "great hall" was "choke full" of smoke. The scene was one which would have done a poet's heart good. Nothing could be more poetical than the graceful way in which the volumes of smoke curled as they were whiffed, redolent of heavy wet, from each mouth, before losing themselves in the general mass,—especially in those cases in which two or three of the volumes affectionately entwined themselves in each other's embraces. A wag one night popped his head in at the door, and asked the patriot next to him what it was all about. The Destructive, in a gruff brutish tone, replied—"Vy it's jist about a-ending." "Then," said the other coughing loudly as if already half suffocated, "it looks as if it would all end in smoke." It is a fact which deserves to be mentioned to the credit of Jim Rogers, that none but himself seemed to pay the least attention to any speeches

but their own. To be sure, they liberally cheered the eloquence of their compatriots; but cheering a speech is quite compatible, in the case of the Destructives, with not hearing one word of it. Jim acted in this respect as a fugleman to the others, by giving, as I before stated, sundry hearty cheers immediately before burying his head in the pot of porter. The patriots in the body of the room were most exemplary in responding to the little hero's cheers; so that on the whole, no orator ever had any great reason to complain of the want of applause. The torrents of eloquence which each successive speaker poured out, never interrupted the business of the house. In fact, the "great hall" on such occasions only presented the spectacle of a tap-room on an enlarged scale. Mr. S——, to "keep up the concarn," as a bricklayer's hodman one night happily expressed himself, occasionally gave the "Great Radical Association of England" five minutes of his seditious oratory; but at other times, he and a couple of pot-boys had their hands sufficiently full in executing

~~the~~ orders for "'baccy" and heavy wet. In giving these orders, the parties always spoke as loudly as did the demagogue for the time being. The effect was infinitely ludicrous. Take the following as an illustration. Dr. Wade was the orator :—" I say, gentlemen, that until the working classes are united among themselves they will never [" Boy, bring me a pint of porter with the chill taken off"] be able to do any thing [" I say, you little chap with the jacket, get me a pipe and 'baccy"] to redress their grievances. It is now four years—" I say, Mr. S——, I won't stand that any longer any how. It's a good quarter o' an hour since I ordered a glass o' gin-and-water, and I've not got it yet."—" You'll get it presently."] It is now four years since the Reform Bill passed into a law, and none of you [" Bring me a match to light my pipe with—will you, boy?"] have reaped the slightest benefit—[Mr. S———. "Did you pay for *your* porter, Jack Hogan?" "Voy to be sure I did. This here Bob Martin," pointing to a son of St. Crispin who sat beside him, "saw me fork out the

hapnies. Didn't you, Bob?" "Yes, I'll take my oath on't, Jack."] Not one of you, I say, gentlemen, have yet derived the slightest benefit from the Reform Bill, and until ["Take a hearty swig of this heavy, Harry, my boy"] associations of this kind are established in all parts of the country, you never can ["Boy, a pint of porter of the right sort; none of your swipes now"] raise yourself to that station in society which you are entitled to occupy. Gentlemen, we owe whatever liberty we possess to a body of men who roamed eight hundred years ago amidst the forests of Germany: let us only be ["I say, Ned, old chap, shall we have another go of gin-and-water,"] united and energetic, and we will complete what our German ancestors ["Mr. S———, have you got no spit-boxes?"] so gloriously began. I am sure, gentlemen, I need not remind you, in pressing on you the advantages of union, of the well-known story of ["Bring me a pint of half-and-half, you boy with the apron round your middle"] the man and the bundle of sticks. I am well aware of what

might be done by”—[Here the worthy Doctor was interrupted by Jim Rogers puffing a quantity of smoke down his throat while Jim was lighting his pipe afresh at a candle, which stood on a table just before the Doctor's face. The effect of the four-feet-six patriot interposing his head and shoulders between the reverend orator and the candle, was that of a temporary total eclipse of the jolly-looking cabbage-coloured physiognomy of the latter, and caused a burst of laughter from the Destructive assemblage. After the cessation of a violent fit of coughing, caused by the dense volume of smoke which Jim had injected into his mouth, the Doctor good-naturedly resumed]—“I am well aware, I was going to say, gentlemen, of what might be done by physical force, but I, as a minister of the gospel of peace, cannot recommend you to have recourse to such extreme measures. I would say [“Mr. S———, bring me a crust of bread and cheese”] exert yourselves peacefully but spiritedly;” [“Another glass of brandy-and-water, Tom, my boy;”] do this and [“I'm blowed if I don't

have another pint of porter. . . Fill this pot again, Mr. S———, and here's your blunt,"] do this, I say, and you are sure eventually to succeed. . . Allow me to say, gentlemen, before I sit down, that perhaps I have gone, in the first part of my speech, a little too far. [A gruff voice from a stranger looking in at the door, "I think you have a deuced deal, Doctor; so good night," followed by cries of "No, no !"] If, gentlemen, I have in the excitement of the moment —[Here the worthy divine wiped the perspiration off his brow, and gave two or three gentle coughs]—if I have said any thing unbecoming, I am sure you will ascribe it all to my zeal in your cause." The rev. gentleman sat down amidst tumultuous cheers, in which the stentorian lungs of "the people" were ably aided by the application of Mr. S———'s pots to the forms on which the Destructives sat. In the midst of the uproarious applause, a recent importation from Tipperary, with his coat off and his breast open; just as if newly returned from paving the streets, advanced to the platform, with a pot in his hand, foaming

with Barclay and Perkins's entire, and looking the orator with an approving smile full in the face, sung out, "Bravo, Docther; here's your jolly good health! Isn't it yourself, Docther, will be afther taking a drop of it to wet your throat with?" So saying, the Emeralder handed "the pewter" and its contents to the Radical Divine, who took a hearty draught of the latter.

I may here be allowed to remark, that considered only as a man of the world, Mr. S—— deserves every credit for the tact he displayed in establishing, and managing to continue for six months, the "Great Radical Association of England;" for under the pretext of discussing the affairs of the state, he decoyed men into the "great hall" of his house to quaff his porter and spirits. Members of the association were but another name for customers of Mr. S——, and very good customers they proved. The quantity of heavy wet, and gin and brandy mixed with water, to say nothing of the "'baccy" which they consumed, was immense. Finding

the thing answer so admirably, he, with infinite tact, contrived to get up another concern, under the pretext of establishing a new religion on the Sunday forenoon,—Sunday being a leisure day. There was singular judgment, too, in the fixing of the hour, eleven o'clock; for he knew full well that at that early hour the working classes could not have got rid of their week's wages; whereas, had he appointed the evening for the meeting, the chances were that either the "disciples" would have expended all their money in the course of the day, or have gone and got drunk elsewhere with the little that remained. The new religion affair was, however, soon put an end to by the magistrates of Marylebone. The new system was in religion what ultra Radicalism is in politics, namely, a levelling of all distinctions in morals, and everybody doing as they liked. It might with great propriety have been called a Radical religion. The grand test of discipleship was, the liberal consumption of Mr. S——'s heavy wet. To vituperate Christianity and talk ribaldry, were

additional recommendations. But this is a digression.

From all I have seen and known of the Destructive character, I should say decidedly that it never appears to half the advantage it does at a public dinner. I never miss an opportunity, if I can help it, of being present at Destructive feeds. The last one at which I was present was the Great Marylebone Festival—for so it was styled—of the 4th of August. It came off on a large cricket-ground at St. John's Wood. It was altogether a rich concern. About 4000 persons were present, 1500 of whom were ladies; at least, they were by courtesy so called. The feeders were all inclosed in a tent erected for the purpose, while a sort of gallery was constructed at the right hand side of the tent, for the accommodation of the ladies. On the left hand side was a small booth, which had been fitted up for the reception of the musicians; while immediately before them was a platform extending from one side of the tent to the other, for the speakers. Immediately

close to the fiddlers was planted a range of 'great guns,' the property of the "Ancient and Honourable Lumber Troop," and which, in the spirit of genuine patriotism, had been "kindly lent for the occasion." The arrival of any noted Destructive was duly announced by a discharge of Lumber Troop artillery. The same mark of distinction greeted any thoroughly levelling toast; and constituted no unsuitable accompaniment to the uproarious applause with which such toasts were received. The dinner was advertised to take place at three o'clock; but as public dinners in the metropolis are understood not to commence for an hour after the time mentioned, many persons who, like myself, had gone from curiosity, did not reach the ground for half an hour after. The consequence was we were too late. The Destructives were all hard at work. The fact was, that as early as three o'clock some of the more knowing ones had taken care to inform themselves of the state of the supplies, and learning there was not enough for one fourth of those who had pur-

chased tickets, they determined to take care of themselves, and "ordered dinner to be laid on the table directly." This was done the more easily and expeditiously as the dinner was a cold one. I reached the ground in the very midst of the repast; and what a scene! It was a regular eating match against time. You would have staked your existence that the majority of the feeders had not had a dinner for the previous eight days. To many, a dinner was an epoch in their existence. The voracity of their appetites, and the capacity of their stomachs, were undeniable. I will venture to say, there were some of them who need not in these respects shrink from a competition with the giraffe in the adjoining Zoological Gardens. The various eatables, consisting of bacon, pork, mutton, beef, with about half-a-dozen fowls to 2500 persons, vanished in an incredible short time. Had they, indeed, by some necromantic process, quitted the table and darted off, on the skyrocket principle, up into the air, to appease the appetites of the parties who were then float-

ing a mile and a half in two balloons,* above our heads, they could scarcely have disappeared more suddenly. One skin-and-bone looking little fellow, with a most unearthly visage, and his hair in a state of the most perfect uproar, swallowed half-a-dozen slices of ham, as if they had been so many Morison's pills. Dr. Wade sat directly opposite "stomaching" a quantity of some suspicious looking article, which was dignified with the name of veal, at the rate of two ounces per every ten seconds. When done, he adjusted his circular shirt-collar, and emptied a pint of heavy wet at a draught. While thus devouring everything set before them with such voracity of appetite, I could not help thinking with myself, that in the true spirit of cannibalism they would have eaten each other, and smacked their lips after the repast, had they been regularly "served up." The whole affair was a trial, not only of the masticating capabilities of the parties, but a

* Two balloons, with four individuals in them, chanced at this time to make their appearance.

trial of strength. For some of the solids there was a regular struggle. In the contest for one of the half dozen fowls, which took place between the rival editors of two of the then unstamped papers, the poor animal was torn limb from limb, each carrying away his half in triumph. The principal contributor to the "Poor Man's Guardian" waylaid one of the waiters before he got the length of the table, and seizing the piece of bacon he was carrying, sat down with his back to the table, and demolished the morsel with all due expedition. Mr. Douglas, the St. Pancras vestryman, who enjoys a joke as much as any man I know, snatched a large slice of mutton from before a little Marylebone Radical, called Ned Monaghan, and devoured it amidst the bitter imprecations of the latter. One of Sir Samuel Whalley's most zealous supporters, a stout pot-bellied little fellow, with a countenance indicative of infinite self-complacency, caught hold of a fragment of a round of beef in its transit from Mr. Henry Wilson, a "Marybone" vestryman, to Mr. Savage, and put-

ting it down on his knees beneath the table, dispatched it in excellent style. A muscular Irishman, who sat next to him, with a nose of so peculiar a conformation as to defy description, picked up a small pudding-dish the moment the waiter deposited it on the table, and appropriated its contents to his own use, before any of his starving companions had time to ask for a morsel of the rarity. Directly opposite sat another ultra of colossal proportions, and who I afterwards understood to be one of Mr. Attwood's "Brummagem men," leaning over another pudding dish, which he surrounded with his left arm, to keep the otherwise incursive paws of friends at a distance; while with his right hand, partly assisted by a spoon, he raised the delicacy to his mouth and slobbered it, as he himself afterwards expressed it, "in a crack." A short-built Destructive just arrived from Manchester, whose appetite, judging from the efforts though they were in vain, which he made to lay his clutches on something, must have been made voracious by his journey,

observed, with a most rueful countenance, and in most pitiable accents, "Vy, I'll be blowed if this aint vorse than the starwation allowance of the vorkus." His brother patriot, an Irishman, to whom the remark was addressed, assented. "By the powers," said he, "and that same's a true word that you have been after spaking: there's not even a prattie to be had for love or money—bad luck to them all!"

Never, indeed, did I see a more impressive exemplification of the principle, "Every one for himself." I wished with all my heart that Wordsworth the poet had been present. He would, in that case, have seen such a forcible illustration as I am sure he could never have expected to witness, of his own well known lines—

"That they would take who have the power,
And they would keep who can."

Forks and knives were but scantily provided. However, they were not much wanted. Mr. Fergus O'Connor, Mr. H——, who threatens, under certain circumstances, to break the backs

of the Marylebone Vestry reporters with a stick, Mr. Murphy, and some forty or fifty of the genteeler class of Radicals, used these implements; but there were scores whom it did not suit to have anything to do with them: they would only have proved impediments to expeditious eating,—the great point to be gained. Others, and these formed a very considerable portion of those present, dispensed with knives and forks for a reason which even a Destructive must allow to be a valid one; they had no use for them—they had nothing to eat. It is impossible to describe the woe-begone countenances of those who were in this predicament. Some of them worked themselves into a furious passion. One man, an undertaker, who seemed himself a very fit subject for some of his trusty brethren of the trade doing for him what he, like the gravedigger in Hamlet, had done for thousands, strongly remonstrated with the waiter.

“ Vaiter, why don’t you bring us something to eat?”

“ It’s all on the table, sir,” said the waiter,

stretching out his arm to withdraw an empty pudding-dish.

“ And it’s all off the table, too,” said the coffin-maker, indignantly.

“ That’s not my fault,” observed John ; and he scudded away with his arms full of empty dishes, to some unknown region where they were to be deposited.

“ Why don’t you complain to one of the stewards,” said Dr. Wade, who, in the scramble had, as already mentioned, come off very successfully. The Rev. Gentleman winked at Mr. Murphy, in a way which evidently showed that he was enjoying a joke at the poor hungry undertaker’s expense.

“ Mr. Savage,” said the latter—Mr. Savage was one of the stewards—“ here’s a pretty go of it ; nothing to eat ; no, not a morsel. Better be at home on Yarmouth bloaters than this.”

“ Whose fault’s that ?” inquired Mr. Savage, with inimitable *sang froid*. Mr. Savage whispered across the table to Mr. Fergus O’Connor,

"I hope the speeches to night will be of the right Radical sort."

"It's the waiter's fault, I suppose," said the man of coffins. "Poor fellow, he knew no better!"

"Well then," observed Mr. Savage, "you have the remedy in your own hands; take his number."

"But he's gone."

"Then why don't you go after him?"

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Savage, I won't submit to be treated in this 'ere way; I must have some grub, or my four shillings back again."

"I wish he may get either," whispered Dr. Wade into my ear, with a smile of that peculiar character which I never saw any one give but himself.

"What excellent music!" observed Mr. Murphy to the "performer" of funerals, trying to soothe him down a little.

"What's music to a hungry stomach?" said

the other, lowering his brow. "Can I dine on music?"

"Never mind," said a sturdy unwashed personage, the very image of Thistlewood of Cato street notoriety, his head half buried in his breast; "never mind, my friend, you are at no less anyhow. I would not give a farden for the whole kit of vat vas on the table; it vas no better than ——"

"It's all very vell for you to say so, after you have had a belly full of the vitals," interrupted the undertaker, his choler rising still higher and higher. "I say, Mr. Savage," he continued, "if I don't get something to eat, I'll be ——"

The remainder of the sentence was lost amidst a tremendous volley fired by the Lumber Troop artillery, in honour of the arrival of Mr. Wakley, who, from his experience of the amount of the supplies at previous Destructive meetings, had wisely taken the precaution of taking an early dinner before leaving the Lancet office.

"Are you all charged?" shouted the chairman, as soon as Mr. Wakley had seated himself.

The clatter of plates, the clinking of pots emptied of their heavy wet, and the Babel of tongues which, conjointly, had before drowned the music, and vied with the reports of the Lumber Troop cannon, ceased in a moment at the magic words. Every one's pewter utensil—that is, every one who had a groat in his pocket to procure the turbid liquid—was filled to the brim in an instant. “The People—the true source of all legitimate power,” said the chairman, in a stentorian voice. (Drank with tremendous applause, which lasted a full minute, and all upstanding.) “The peepil,” responded a vender of muddy coffee, price one penny per half pint. “The pee—,” echoed the Mr. Jim Rogers already alluded to, withdrawing his head from a pot of “heavy” which he was gulping with remarkable energy; but the liquid still gurgling in his throat prevented his completing the sentence, and was within an ace of choking him, to the bargain. Mr. Buckingham, for the only time during the evening, relaxed the rigidity of his features, and condescended to

smile, as the loud cheer with which the toast was drank, died away on the air. To be sure, true to his "tee-total," or temperance society principles, he filled his glass with toast and water out of a large decanter, which lay the whole evening before him full of that very harmless beverage; but it was easy to perceive, without any superior skill in the science of Lavater, that he envied those who heartily partook of the foaming tankards of porter which he saw the waiters carrying in every direction around him. Mr. Roebuck rose amidst loud and general cries of "Mount a chair," "Can't see you," to propose the unstamped press. "He trusted the time would soon come, when the whole of the London press would be what Hetherington's Dispatch now was; [Mr. Hetherington lifted his hat;] for so long as the odious red stamp deformed the broad sheet, our newspapers would be the same vile, servile, vulgar publications which they now were. [Thundering cheers, re-echoed by the artillery of the Lumber Troop.] Mr. Lee, editor of "The Man," one of the

penny unstamped, leaped on the table, and, hat in hand, hurraed so vociferously, that it was apprehended he would alarm the wild beasts in the neighbouring Zoological Gardens. Sir Samuel Whalley proposed something, but from the uproarious state of the "gentlemen" present, no one could hear what it was. The only detached sentence I could catch was, that he was delighted to see "such a fair phalanx of bright eyes" before him. Sir Samuel all the while kept his optics immovably fixed on the countenances of some really beautiful girls who sat directly opposite, and once or twice put his fore-fingers on his mouth, as if to prevent the meeting being annoyed by a slight cough. Dr. Bowring, who in the early part of the meeting appeared "lost in thought," possibly from endeavouring to resolve into general principles, some of the singularly diversified dialects he heard spoken, now became quite fidgetty, as if anxious to effect his escape from the infliction of sounds caused by everybody speaking and shouting at once. The noise, indeed, had by

this time become so intolerable, that Mr. Hume was obliged to give up an abstruse calculation as to the profits which the landlord who furnished the dinner would make by it. Here Mr. Douglas shouted out that some one had robbed him of his watch. "And some cove," said a dark looking, woolly-haired, unshaved patriot, sitting next to him, at the same time fumbling in his pocket, while the waiter was standing to receive the price of a pot of porter, "Some cove has taken all my browns." The consequence was, he was obliged to borrow a groat to pay for the beverage. Finding it worse than folly to make any further attempt at oratory that evening, Mr. Savage mounted the platform, and, waving the rod of office which, as one of the stewards, he had held in his hand all the evening,—he said, in a voice of a twenty-trumpet power,* that the ladies were now becoming impatient for the dance, and he was sure there was too much gallantry among the Radicals

* Mr. Savage's voice, even in common conversation, has a great deal of the shrillness of the trumpet in it.

of Marylebone to deny them, for one moment longer, that pleasure. The gentle hint was received with a round of applause, which threatened to tear in one moment the tent in tatters. The Radicals rose *en masse*, the forms and tables were removed instanter, and in a few seconds some dozens of both sexes were tripping the light fantastic toe. Mr. Hume and Mr. Buckingham then left the company without the formality of bidding any one, except Sir Samuel Whalley, good night. I thought I could not do better than follow their example.

Such is a fair specimen of a Destructive dinner. I have been present at others still more ludicrous; but I have preferred giving a sketch of the Marylebone one of August the 4th, both because it is the latest of any note, and because the principal performers are well-known "public characters."

Mungo Park mentions in his "Travels in the Interior of Africa," that the inhabitants are in the habit of referring back to the date of any particular circumstance, not by giving the

year of its occurrence, but by stating that it took place at or about the same time as some other well-known event. For example, he says, that circumstances which occurred in the course of his journey through the interior, will be afterwards referred to as having happened at the time of the White man's visit, without mentioning the year. It is precisely so with the Destructives. A dinner of any kind, or at any time, is, as before observed, an era in their lives: a public dinner is with them an epoch in the history of the country. Hence they always speak of other circumstances as having transpired in the year of some great Destructive dinner.

I have mentioned, in a previous part of this chapter, what I conceive to be the number of Radicals in the metropolis. It is right to state, however, that their number *apparently* undergoes a great variation according to circumstances. Radicalism is in its most palmy state when trade is dull, and when the working classes have consequently to resist the rebellion of the belly.

When they are fully employed, neither “Tibbald’s Road,” nor the Rotunda, nor Mr. S——’s “Great Hall,” has any attractions to them. The demagogues who find agitation to be like the air they breathe, then change the burden of their lamentation from the sins of the Whigs and Tories, to the supineness of the people. In theory, however, the working classes are as great Radicals as ever, and when “times turn slack” again, will shout and brawl as vociferously, and make as great a fuss about universal suffrage, and the other principles which follow in its train, as before.

CHAPTER III.

LITERATURE.

London the emporium of literature—Works of fiction—Poetry — History — Statistics — Philosophy—Works on the subject of health—Biography and Autobiography—Voyages and Travels—Public taste for light reading—Divinity—Extent to which books sell — Cheap republications of standard works—Embellished works—Supposed number and circumstances of persons who live by their literary labours —The success of works not always dependent on their merits—The precariousness of the literary profession—Privations of Authors—The expedients resorted to by Authors to attract attention.

LONDON, as every one is aware, is the great emporium of trade, commerce, wealth, and fashion; it is still more so of literature. Thither authors flock from all parts of the country, even from its remotest points, to publish their works. Not only is it thought there is a want of respect-

ability in books which issue from the provincial press, but it is taken for granted—and in most cases justly—that they have not the same chances of success as if emanating from the metropolis. London has, undoubtedly, many advantages in this respect peculiar to itself. It is, for example, the only place which has a regular communication with all other parts of the country. It has, too, as the metropolis, a name which no other town can by possibility ever acquire. It not only now is, but ever must continue, the great depôt of literary works; the place whence, wherever they may be written, they must emanate. In speaking, therefore, of the literature of the metropolis, I may be considered as speaking, in a great measure, of the literature of Great Britain generally.

About twenty years ago, the literary tide set in in favour of fiction. The extraordinary success of the *Waverley Novels* stimulated a host of writers to apply themselves to works of a similar class. If those who, after Sir Walter Scott, were the earliest in this literary field, did not acquire the

same fame, or derive the same pecuniary advantage as the Magician of the North, they were sufficiently successful to encourage them to make new efforts, and to induce others to follow their example. Hence, about ten or twelve years since, when the mania for works of fiction was at its height, it was calculated that from two to three hundred appeared in the course of a year. All of them of any note could boast a sale of from 750 to 1,000 : decidedly good ones often reached a sale of from 1,500 to 2,000 copies. A striking change has since come over the spirit of this class of literature. The authors, whose works of fiction a dozen years since commanded a sale of from 1,500 to 2,000 copies, cannot now command a sale of 500. I could mention many instances in confirmation of this, but it would be equally invidious to authors and publishers. I may state in general terms, that on one day, about six months ago, four novels, two of them by authors of great celebrity in the high and palmy days of works of fiction, were published by different houses, and that the sale

of neither of the works exceeded 350 copies; that of three out of the four was under that number. Publishers have now come to the conclusion—a conclusion forced on them by painful experience—that the days of this class of works are past for ever. Authors may continue to write, but publishers will not publish, except in comparatively few cases, even though the copyright were offered them for nothing. If authors *will* write novels, they must publish them at their own risk. This, indeed, has been the case, though the public are not aware of the fact, in many instances of late years, as I shall have occasion afterwards to show at some length. The truth is, that, with the exception of the works of fifteen or twenty authors, no individual ever now dreams of purchasing a novel for his own reading. The only copies bought are for the circulating libraries.

Poetry is at a still greater discount in the literary market than novels. Offer a publisher a volume of poetry, and he sickens at the very sight. He looks upon you much in the same

way as if he had detected you in the act of attempting to pick his pocket. And assuredly not without reason ; for in various cases, within the last three or four years, have publishers smarted most severely by speculating in the commodity of poetry ; and this, too, while the quality of the article has been admitted on all hands to be very superior. A short time since, a popular poet sold the copyright of a poem for 100*l.* to a publisher at the West End. It was really a beautiful composition, and was most liberally praised in reviews of from ten to twenty pages, in “Blackwood’s Magazine,” and the other leading periodicals ; and yet the sale did not much exceed 50 copies. Another poem of a humorous kind, extending to nearly three hundred pages, which was very clever, and displayed great depth and variety of erudition, was published about twenty months ago. It was to the author the labour of years ; and what does the reader suppose was the extent of the sale ? Just eighteen copies. To such an extent, indeed, has poetry become a drug in the market, that I do not believe the names

of Campbell, or Rogers, or Wordsworth, would insure a sale of more than a few hundred copies, of any poetical work they could at present produce.

It is the same with regard to re-publications of the works of the standard poets of a past age. Not long since, an enterprising publisher got up one of the cheapest and most beautiful editions I have ever witnessed, of the works of the most popular poet of the last century; and in order that every justice might be done the work, in bringing its claims before the public, he spent upwards of 500*l.* in advertising it. He expected a sale of 5,000 copies, and accordingly printed that number: he never sold 500. In another case, a beautiful reprint was made of the works of the most popular poet of Scotland in the seventeenth century; the poet's name was in everybody's mouth, but his works had for many years been scarce. In these circumstances the publisher thought a cheap and elegant edition of those works, with a carefully written memoir, and a critical notice of the poets of the

same period, would be a hit. The event proved how erroneous were his calculations. The work, in one handsome volume, made its appearance; it was cordially commended, and deservedly so, by the majority of the periodicals; but the sale never reached 30 copies.

Of late years little in the shape of history has been attempted. Where the subject has been interesting, and the execution respectable, such works have met with a fair sale. The historical works which have appeared in Dr. Lardner's "Cyclopædia," have all been successful; but that is not a fair index of the demand for historical literature, as it is impossible to distinguish between those cases in which such works have sold on their own account, and those in which they have been purchased, merely because they formed a part of a connected series of volumes on literature in general.

Statistical works on subjects of general importance are in fair demand at present. The majority of those which have of late been published by Mr. Knight, have been of this class,

and they have, for the most part, been very successful. Mr. Babbage's "Economy of Manufactures," Dr. Lardner's "Steam Engine," Macculloch's "Commercial Dictionary," Baine's "History of the Cotton Manufacture," &c. have severally had an extensive sale.

Philosophy is in bad repute at the present moment, among the reading public. Supposing Lockes and Boyles were to arise in dozens, they would not just now succeed in getting either themselves or their works into notice. Within the last few years several very able and profound works on the subject of mental philosophy have appeared, but the most successful of them have not reached a sale of 200 copies.

Works bearing on the subject of health, when drawn up in a popular form, are now very generally read. Dr. James Clark's admirable "Treatise on Consumption," has attracted more attention beyond the pale of the profession, than any similar work ever published. This fact must have been observed by every one in the habit of reading the magazines and newspapers; for

almost every newspaper and literary periodical of any note, has most earnestly recommended it to the attention of the public.

Biography and autobiography are in considerable request, where the subjects are well known, and the books are well written. Barry Cornwall's "Life of Kean," and Campbell's "Life of Mrs. Siddons," have each been tolerably successful. "The Life of Salt," the British Consul at Cairo, and "The Life of Sir Thomas Picton," have been still more so. The "Life of Lord Exmouth," by Mr. Osler, published two years ago, has sold to the extent of 1,500 copies. Galt's "Autobiography," though the price was 28s. the two volumes, and Sir Egerton Brydges' "Autobiography," published at the same price, severally reached a sale of about 700 copies.

Books of voyages and travels, especially the latter, when the part of the world visited excites interest, and where the writer has displayed judgment and tact in the use of the materials provided for him, are read with avidity. Quin's "Voyage down the Danube" has sold to the

extent of 1,200 or 1,400 copies. Holman's "Voyage Round the World," though in four large volumes, has met with a sale of 600 or 700 copies. The Voyages of Captain Ross and of Captain Back to the Arctic Seas, have met with an extensive sale. The number of copies sold of the first exceeds 2,000; that of the second about 1,000, though both were expensive works. Mr. Bentley's edition of "Lamartine's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land," has met with a large sale; so have most of the late works on the same subject. Stuart's "Three Years' Residence in America," has been very successful. It has reached a third edition, making a sale of upwards of 1,500 copies. Macfarlane's "Travels in the East," has sold nearly to the same extent. Drs. Reed and Mathison's "Travels in America," published in 1835, sold to the extent of 1,000 in seven or eight months, though an expensive work in two volumes; and Drs. Cox and Hoby's "Visit to the American Baptist Churches," published in March or April last year, went through the first edition in about

three months. The sale of Mr. Barrow's "Tour round Ireland," performed in the autumn of last year, has met with great success, upwards of 800 copies having been sold of it in less than six months after the time of publication.

Works of a light and sketchy kind are among those most generally read in the present day. It is the admirable wit and humour of Captain Marryat's sketches of character, more than anything else, that render his works so popular. It was the same qualities that brought Theodore Hook's late novel of "Gilbert Gurney" to a second edition in about six months, though few other novels have reached a second edition for the last twelve months. To the same cause, also, is "Boz" to attribute the sale of 1,500 copies of his two volumes of "Sketches of Every-day Scenes, and Every-day People."*

Divinity in most cases is an unsaleable commodity in the bibliopolic market. Sermons are

* Since this was written, the work has reached a still greater sale.

especially so. Perhaps not one theological work out of twenty or thirty, pays its expenses. The works of distinguished divines, however, still command a remunerating sale. So great is the popularity of the works of the late Rev. Robert Hall, that one of the houses for the publication of religious books, gave 4,000*l.* for the copyright, in six volumes—including the memoir of the author's life, by Dr. Olinthus Gregory. The copyright of the works of the late Rev. C. Simeon, of Cambridge, in twenty volumes, was also recently purchased by Holdsworth and Ball, if I mistake not, for 5,000*l.* The Rev. Alexander Fletcher's "Family Devotion," though the price is twenty-four shillings, has had an extensive sale. Upwards of 2,000 copies were disposed of it in a very short time. Nor is its great success to be wondered at; for if anything could be more happy than the plan of the work, it is the way in which it is executed.

The current of public taste seems at present to run principally in the direction of works which have a personal relation; no matter whe-

ther to bodies of men, or to persons in their individual capacities.* The caricatures and personalities with which Mrs. Trollope's "America and the Americans" abound, were the great secret of its success. The same may be said of her late work on "Paris and the Parisians." Anything in the shape of scandal or abuse, is sure to be read with avidity; so also are those works which, though there be nothing ill-natured or vituperative in them, make us acquainted with the habits and peculiarities of persons who fill a large space in the public eye, provided the works be cleverly written. It was Mr. Willis's disclosures of this kind, that proved the passport to his "Pencillings by the Way" to a sale of 1,500 copies in the space of twelve months.

The number of books published last year in London, in the various departments of science

* "Almack's" was an instance of this. It was the freedom with which it dealt with well-known personages, though under fictitious names, that procured it a sale of upwards of 2,000 copies. Prince Puckler's "Tour in England," a few years since, owed its success to the same cause.

and literature, were, as nearly as can be ascertained, fifteen hundred.

It is calculated that out of every fifteen books published, taking them on the average, not more than one pays its own expenses. "The Edinburgh Review" proved to demonstration, some years ago, that only one out of every fifty pamphlets which make their appearance, pay the expenses of paper, print, stitching, and advertising. On this subject I shall have something more to say, when I come to the chapter on "Authors and Publishers."

Only one book, on an average, out of about 200, reaches a second edition. Out of 500 books, not more than one gets to a third edition; and out of 1,000 only one has the good fortune to reach a fourth edition.

There are various causes which have of late operated against the sale of books, altogether irrespective of their merits. Their very number is one of these. It is impossible the demand could ever equal the supply, unless we were a nation of philosophers, and had nothing else to

do than to read. Horace said, in his day, that verse was the trade of every living wight. What would he say were he to revisit the world in 1837, and see the host of authors, both in verse and prose, which at present crowd the temple of Parnassus? You now meet with an author in every fifteenth or twentieth person you chance to encounter in the daily intercourse of life. Cobbett used to say, that if a string were thrown across the Strand to catch the accidental passers by, it would be found that, taking one with another, they were much abler and more intelligent men than the members of the House of Commons. Throw a string across any thoroughfare you choose in the metropolis, excepting of course such localities as St. Giles's and the Seven Dials, and you may depend on it that out of every thirty or forty persons you catch, two if not more are authors. The mere circumstance of having written a book, good, bad, or indifferent, was at one time a mark of distinction of itself. Now almost every man, who can master the most common rules of Lindley Murray, has in

some shape or other, at one time or other of his life, seen himself in print. I recollect hearing of a well-informed young man, much accustomed to literary society, who took the singular whim into his head that he would never read a line of the Waverley Novels. He adhered to his resolution, and used to be pointed out in every literary company as the gentleman who had not read the Scotch novels. The man accustomed to mix with good society, who has not in some way or other been in print, would now be deemed equally singular.

The amazing increase which has taken place of late years in what is called cheap periodical literature, has interfered with the sale of works published in the usual form, and at the usual price. In these cheap publications the public get the cream of what appears in the usual class of works, within a few days or weeks after their appearance, and consequently will not think of purchasing the original works themselves. Until some better protection be afforded to authors and publishers against these wholesale pillagers,

the sale of works in general never can become what it formerly was.

The late republications, in a cheap and elegant form, of the works of popular authors, have very materially contributed to diminish the demand for new productions, published at the usual price. Nearly 40,000 copies of the republication of the works of Sir Walter Scott have been sold. Mr. Murray, it is understood, has disposed of 30,000 copies of Moore's "Life and Works of Byron." The same enterprising publisher has got rid of nearly 8,000 of his edition of the "Works of Crabbe;" and I believe the sale of his Boswell's "Life of Johnson," and his "Johnsoniana," in 10 volumes, has exceeded 5,000. That number of Allan Cunningham's "Life and Works of Burns," was sold by the publishers within twelve months of the completion of the edition. Mr. Valpy's edition of "Shakspeare," commanded a sale of 4,000; and his edition of "Hume and Smollett's England," was not much less successful. Messrs. Saunders and Otley's "Life and Works of Cowper" has had a sale of

some thousands. Messrs. Baldwin and Craddock's edition of the works of the same poet has also had a tolerable sale, though I have not heard any statement of the extent. Of Mr. Macrone's edition of the "Life and Works of Milton," the sale has been between 1,500 and 2,000. All of these works have been sold at five shillings per volume; and in addition to the cheapness of the price, there have been, in every case, the further attractions of the best quality of paper, the most tasteful and accurate typography, beautifully executed engravings, and elegant binding. The circulation of so many volumes throughout the country within the last ten years, must of necessity have lessened, to a very great extent, the sale of those more expensive works which have been published during that period. The public taste, however, is beginning to be diverted from this class of publications, and is likely soon to be turned again into its former channel. Within the last two or three years the demand for such works has so much declined, that no publisher is likely, for some

time to come, to engage with any republication of the same kind. The expense of getting them up is so great, and the price of each volume is so cheap, that a sale of less than 3,500 copies will not render the speculation a safe one for the publisher.

A very great change has also of late come over the spirit of the reading public, with regard to highly-embellished works. Eight or ten years ago there was an immense demand for Annuals; that demand has now so much abated, that several of those which were then so popular have ceased to exist; and two or three others are understood to be published at a loss. Formerly, a sale of 10,000 copies was not deemed extraordinary; now, with the single exception of "Friendship's Offering," which sells between 6,000 and 7,000, I doubt if half that number be disposed of any of them. Nothing short of a sale of 4,500 copies will pay the expenses of getting up an Annual, provided the engravings are executed in a respectable manner. Some years ago, when the spirit of rivalry among the

proprietors of these works was at its height, I knew of one or two instances in which as much as 140% was given for one engraving. Sums of 60%, 70% and 80% were then quite common.

Within the last year or two a great alteration has been made in the form of illustrated works. From the small Annual size, the proprietors have leaped to the folio and quarto form. These last sizes are undoubtedly best adapted for the boudoir or the drawing-room table, and they display the graphic embellishments to the greatest advantage; but their want of portability is a very great objection to them; they are not nearly so well suited for presents as the smaller size.

The number of individuals who live in London entirely by their literary labour, has been variously estimated. It is impossible to say with confidence what the exact number is. Among the various conjectures which have been made on the subject, that which computes the number to be about 4,000 appears to me to be the nearest approximation to the truth. Of this number, perhaps about 700 are, in one way or other, con-

nected with periodicals. Many of them, I need hardly say, have no better than chameleon's fate three days out of the seven. The joke of being poor was formerly used only in reference to poets; they have always been so remarkable for their poverty that the words poet and poverty have almost become synonymous. Now the evil of poverty is unhappily felt by the writers of prose as well as poetry, to an extent unparalleled in by-gone times. Grub Street was formerly supposed, by a sort of poetical fiction, to be the only locality of poor authors: now a dozen Grub Streets would not contain the number, even supposing they were to adopt the principle so strictly acted on among the Irish inhabitants of St. Giles's, namely, of a dozen of them vegetating in the same apartment. Now-a-days there is hardly an attic in the humbler localities of the metropolis, but at present has, or has lately had, its poor author as an inmate. I have spoken of 4,000 as being the supposed number of persons who live by their literary labour: were I to include those who have *tried* to live by their

literary exertions, but have been obliged to abandon "the profession," because they found they could not earn by it what was sufficient to keep soul and body together, I should have to double the number. There are scenes of destitution and misery ever and anon exhibited among literary men—aye, and literary women too,—which would make the heart sick. And it ought not to be forgotten that want comes armed to them with aggravated horrors. They are of necessity persons of more sensitive minds than the majority of other sufferers from the ills of poverty; and what adds to the pungency of their distress is the circumstance of their slighted intellectual efforts being almost invariably mixed up with their physical destitution. I myself could detail cases of wretchedness among literary men which have come under my own observation, at the bare mention of which every rightly-constituted mind would stand appalled.

Of the literary profession, above all others, it may be said that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. The most talented

authors are not always the most popular, nor their works the most productive in a pecuniary point of view. I am not sure, indeed, paradoxical as the position may appear, whether, in the majority of cases, works which have attained a great popularity and met an extensive sale, have not been surpassed in merit by many others which have fallen still-born from the press. There are various accidental circumstances which from time to time conspire to force a work of little merit into notice, and procure for it a large sale, while works of superior talent are consigned to eternal oblivion the very moment they have been ushered into being. The writer of the successful work, though possessing little or no merit, may, for instance, have very influential friends in the literary world, who may be the means of pushing it into notice; while the author of the work of great talent may have no friend to lend him a helping hand in the hour of need. In other instances, again, the subject of the former work may be one which suits the false or powerful prejudices of the public at the moment; while

that of the latter may be at direct variance with both. But it is useless to speculate on the subject: the fact is uncontroverted and it is incontrovertible. Let me state two cases in illustration. Milton's "Paradise Lost" was deemed by the publishers of the day a work of so little worth, that he was only able to obtain 15*l.* for the copyright, and that small sum was made payable in three instalments of 5*l.* each. It was not until many years after it was published, that its merits were discovered or appreciated. Had Milton trusted to it, he might have perished of want; while there were doubtless some scores of persons calling themselves literary men, of whom the next generation never heard a syllable, living at the time in ease and comfort by the produce of their literary labours. In the case of Hume, again, when he published the first volume of his "History of England," it proved so complete a failure that he says he would, but for the war at that time preventing it, have changed his name and left the country for ever in disgust. Even at the end of twelve months, only forty-five

copies of his work had sold. If any one looks into the Monthly and Critical Reviews, and other periodicals of the time, he will find that while Hume, instead of gaining anything, must have been a serious loser by his literary labours, there were others, not possessed of a thousandth part of his talents, deriving a handsome income from the exercise of their pens. It is true, indeed, that neither Milton nor Hume is to be included in the catalogue of those men of talent I have spoken of as having had their works consigned to everlasting oblivion the moment they were born ; but their resurrection from the land of forgetfulness was merely the effect of chance ; and it is beyond all question that the works of many others of great talent have never been awakened, and never will, from the sleep of death into which they fell on the day of their publication.

The literary profession is, of all others, the most precarious. To-day you may be tolerably successful and in passably easy circumstances. To-morrow, you may be most unfortunate and

have to encounter all the horrors of want. This year you may make a hit: you may write a work which will sell: next year, your effort is a decided failure: the day your work is born, is the day of its death.

It is all very well for young men to apply themselves to literary pursuits as an amusement; but he who advises any young friend to make it a profession by which he is to support himself, incurs a responsibility of no ordinary magnitude. The probabilities are in the proportion of a thousand to one that he is advising him to adopt a course which will render him miserable through life. It was the invariable practice of Sir Walter Scott to caution all young persons who submitted their maiden efforts to him, against trusting for their future support to their literary labours. I some time since saw a private letter from him to a young man of good talents and great literary enthusiasm, in which he most earnestly warned him against trusting for his bread to his literary labours, adding, that if he did so, he might consider it as all but certain that he was leaning on a broken reed.

Of all spectacles in the world, I know of none so affecting as that of a man of intellect struggling with all the ills of poverty, and yet applying himself incessantly to literary labour, with the feeble hope that he may in future be more successful than he has been in the times that are past. It is a fine illustration of the scriptural expression of hoping against hope. His physical frame is exhausted from sheer want of the necessities of life: he shuts himself up in his cold and cheerless garret: his eyes are rarely refreshed by the beauties of nature: his brains are racked; his spirits are jaded; and yet there is just sufficient of the principle of hope left in his otherwise dreary bosom, to prevent his resigning himself to absolute despair. Ill-fated mortal! There he sits and cogitates, and commits his thoughts to paper, unknown to and uncared for by the world. The eye of no human being smiles on him: the sympathetic and encouraging accents of no fellow-creature greet his ears. He may be in the busiest and most bustling part of the metropolis, and yet be as much in the depths of solitude as if in

the midst of the vast wilderness of which the author of "The Seasons" so beautifully sings.

I have often been amused at the various expedients to which men sometimes resort to bring themselves into notice, when they cannot accomplish their object by the ordinary means. The Duke of Newcastle attracts that attention in the House of Lords and the country, by his violence, which he could never secure by his eloquence. Colonel Sibthorp's mustachios do the same good service for him in the House of Commons, though his speeches would fail in doing it were he to play the orator till doomsday. Some men attract attention by the singularity of their dress; others by the eccentricity of their conduct. The man of old set fire to the temple though he knew that his own death would be the consequence, rather than that his name should remain unknown. And just now, there appear to be thousands of the lower classes in France who aim at notoriety by their attempts to take away the life of the Citizen King. I have heard of an Irishman, who finding that no one

bestowed a look upon him while he stood in the usual position, drilled himself into the habit of inverting himself in some of the leading thoroughfares; in other words, of standing for several minutes on the crown of his head. But one of the most ingenious and yet convenient expedients of which I have lately heard for bringing oneself into notice, was that before alluded to, of a young man, otherwise well informed, who represented himself as "the man who had never read the Waverley Novels." He observed that every one making any pretensions to intelligence, made a point of displaying in company his acquaintance with the Waverley Novels, and that in consequence of the universality of this, no one brought himself into notice by exhibiting his intimacy with those celebrated productions. He therefore concluded that by affecting a total ignorance of them he was sure to excite attention. The event showed his opinion was correct. He soon found that he could not have adopted an expedient more effectual for his purpose. All eyes were upon him whenever he

mixed in respectable society. Not to have read the Waverley Novels seemed a thing so extraordinary in a literary man, that people were all anxiety to see so singular a person. His company was courted, just as if he had had something about him which distinguished him from the rest of his species. I doubt whether the Learned Pig ever excited greater curiosity. He was invited to routs and parties, not from any abstract friendship for him, but merely as a sort of raree show to the other guests.

I could mention many other ingenious expedients which I have known to be resorted to with the view of attracting attention, in almost every walk of life. In no profession are such expedients more common than in authorship. Experience has mournfully taught authors without number, that no distinction is now-a-days to be acquired by a work written in the ordinary style. To attract attention, it is found that the work must be one out of the usual course. I could give innumerable instances of the schemes devised by literary men with the view of attract-

ing attention to themselves and their works. Some of these are ingenious; others are absolutely ludicrous. A recent author seeks to bring his book of travels into notice by the following ludicrous dedication:—"To all Petty Walkers in go-carts, as well as mighty pedestrians on their own Hind-Legs, who are able to declare themselves such, by having accomplished either a cock-stride in the one case, or a seven-league pace of Peter Schlemil in the other;—and with hearty Wishes for the Prosperity of St. Crispin, and plenty of tough Shoe-leather, this Tour is respectfully dedicated by the Author."

With many authors an "out of the way" preface is thought to be the most likely to attract attention. Here follows an amusing sample of this species of preface writing. It ushers into existence a work in two large volumes, which has appeared within the last six months:—

"What a delightful thing it is to feel free and unconfined!—to be able to write just what one pleases—to *publish it too*—and yet, at the same time to feel, that no creature existing

anywhere throughout the whole system of planets, will ever read it, or know anything about it!

“ I’faith, this is delightful:—talk not to me of secrecy—the Holy League is a joke. Let me curvet and frisk now as much as I choose—no person ever reads a preface: ‘ Preface and botheration,’ is the word; ‘ turn it over, and let’s dive into the book—*let’s look at the story.* I like this idea—yet it is not uncommon among readers. I feel as private and safe here as Æneas and Dido in the cave after the hunting party—indeed, much more so,—for I have no Dido here—no Dulcinea—to share the retirement of my preface with me. *Tol de rol lol!* Now for a bit of fun—what shall we do? Here we go—let’s have a song—*Rum ti iddity iddity!*—Stay, there’s no sentiment in that. Let’s have another, this is your sorts!—‘ *There was an old man,*’—no—‘ *There was an old woman,*’—no—I forget just now. Never mind, we can roar, if we can’t sing—’twill serve. I could go on jumping

and prancing like a frisky colt in a meadow, till I dropped down exhausted with the sweet fatigue of excessive frolicking. No earthly being has the slightest notion of my undignified and unmanlike pranks:—a preface—ah! a most secret preface! Oh, it is sweet to relax and sometimes make oneself a little bit of a fool! No one will know it—what shall we do next? My heart is full—huzza! yoicks!—here we go again!—*hoc est vivere!*

“I am almost out of breath—let me pause—let me rest—let me take the ebullitious kettle of my spirits off the fire. Just look—the bubbles soon subside when I do so. And here—with cessation comes gravity—and with gravity comes thought—and with thought comes reflection—and reflection carries a man back to the retrospection and overhauling of his own deeds. And what then?—Why, we perceive we have relaxed a trifle in our dignity and austerity—we have a little eased the tensivity of our rank among ‘creatures of clay,’ as Byron calls us. Can’t help it—let’s be

merry whilst we are able—we can always cry—not always laugh: besides, there is nothing like being a little *outré* and eccentric, or ‘original.’ Thousands of clever and wise men have lived and died in oblivion, because they followed the herd:—let’s try the opposite course. But Horace writes that Apollo sometimes loosened his bowstring, and Homer sometimes nodded—this is consoling.

“ But now we are grave and reflecting; and although we feel positive that no flesh-and-blood biped in the vassel ’orld will at all venture to taste the nut whose shell looks in the slightest prefatorial—yet, it is possible—*just possible*—that some unprecedented and truly strange being *may*, by a species of million-to-one fraction of a chance, skim o’er the page, lightly as Camilla o’er a field of standing corn—*id est*, if the book happens to fall open at the place, as all young ladies’ prayer-books do at ‘*The Solemnization, &c.*’—but, believe us, not otherwise.

“ What then?—why nothing partic’lar.

“ We have made our tour—and furthermore, we have written our book. Know ye that the first we fully intended to do—but as to the second part of the affair, *that* we had no determination of doing (save our own private notes)—yet it *is* done. How it came about in the previous instance, it is hard to say—harder than *iron*;—no matter—fifty thousand things happen in this world, for which there is no accounting:—but it *is* done.

“ The walk was much to undertake in idea—but verily, it was far more to accomplish in deed. Well do I remember the time when I could run about as actively as the best of two-legged animals;—but those days are no more—and I am only astonished, that although in my youth deprived of nearly ‘half my understanding,’ I have been able to complete that which my unfibbing volumes declare I have done. There is no vanity in feeling astonished at myself in this—i’faith, no—there is no cause. Did I now possess the two good and straight legs which I once wore, and which

I see appended to my corpus with the mind's eye of recollection, I should hint nothing at the feat:—but I do say, even of myself, that when I look back on my wanderings over hill and mountain, enveloped in the clouds thousands of feet high—down under ground hundreds of feet deep—over rock and precipice—through heat and cold—sunshine and rain—that it was a great deal for *me* to do;—and I moreover think, that I shall never do the like again.

“ My book is published.—I wrote not for fame—neither for fortune:—I will not say I have either—no matter. I am selfish enough to avow that I have written for *my own* amusement, and not with the studied intention of amusing others. If, however, by chance, these pages fall into the hands of those who feel amused by them—there is no harm done. If, whilst I write for my own amusement, my time be employed to my own improvement,—there is an advantage gained. If, whilst I write for my own improvement, and this my writing fall into the hands of those who may thereby be

improved—there is a double advantage gained. But this last supposition is vanity.—

“ Stop—we are getting egotistic and prosy—this will never do—we have changed our key since we began—we have struck a flat third—and how dismal it sounds! This *minore* is abominable:—let us to the *maggiore* after the double-bar, as Euterpe used to say. Come, *brillante—scherzosamente—presto—con fuoco!* This is more like it—Will this do better? let us sing and *rum-ti-tum* for a few minutes, or else we must *da capo*, and repeat the first strain. And when we have thoroughly blanched our blue devils, we may as well put an end to this most secret preface, *volti subito*, and peep into the book.—

“ Come on.—”

This will be admitted, on all hands, to be rich in the ludicorus. There are others, again, who think that the great matter is to open one's work with something striking. Here is a specimen of an attempt of this kind, from a work which has lately appeared:—

“ ‘ _____
_____?’

“ ‘ Ay—what? What *are* you talking about? What *did* you say?—for if I heard the words, I am sure I don’t understand the sense of the question.’

“ ‘ _____
_____?’

“ ‘ There ’tis again! By Jupiter’s pig-tail! Stay—I like not the oath. By the *living Jingo!* (I should say.) By the living Jingo and all the little Jingoos;—why, what does this mean? Oh, all ye Jupiters and Junos, that ever kept house upon Mount Olympus, what is to be done with mortality, when wit and reason go a wool-gathering? *Who* is it can have possibly instilled into your brain such a Hudibrastical, Quixotical, knight-errantical idea? Oh, madness, madness! I’ faith, all this will never do: you *can-not* (giving it peculiar emphasis,) you *can-not* be in earnest. Oh, man, (for such I had thought thee,) how art thou puerilised! Do you *really*

intend it—do you *really* mean to go? and so far—perhaps a thousand miles! Preposterous! Oh, reason, whither hast thou fled? Why hast thou, (for I'm sure thou hast,) why hast thou bid adieu to thy more than twenty years' lodgment, to seek another home, I know not where? Hast thou fled, to roam among the rugged mountains? to chase the bearded goat to his Alpine den? to listen to the foaming torrent chafing o'er its rocky bed? Hast thou fled to the sunny bank^s of some crystal lake, to lie thee down, and hang o'er its waters like Eve, and view thyself in reflection? or dost thou, like Diana, delight in the forest? To what region hast thou gone? for like another Hamlet, thou hast passed from hence, to wanton elsewhere. And dost thou, with a curling finger, beck to thy old dwelling to follow thee?'

“ ‘Go I must—the die of my inclination and purpose is cast. To argue thus, methinks you view me not with reason's eye.’

“ ‘You speak not now with reason's tongue.’

“ ‘Excuse, and hear me.’

“ ‘I’ faith I will: for I long to hear the English of this thine outlandish——’

“ ‘Nay, not outlandish—I’m not going to sea——’

“ ‘Sea! who the d—— said a word about sea?’

“ ‘I thought you did—at least indirectly.’

“ ‘Not I; either directly or indirectly,’—straight for’ard or backward—sideways, or upwards, or downwards.’

“ ‘Know, then, in brief, that this century is not the last century.’

“ ‘True.’

“ ‘Don’t interrupt me. That is, that the features of things wear not precisely the same air and bearing to-day, as they did in the yesterday of the past hundred summers.’

“ ‘True—a century works a change on the features of most of us.’

“ ‘The times do not wag in our age as they did in the age of our fathers.’

“ ‘True.’

“ ‘ Fathers do not now, as they did then, know how to dispose of a family of overgrown idle boys.’

“ ‘ True—then are you a father with a family of overgrown idle boys?’

“ ‘ No: more like an idle boy, the son of my father.’

“ ‘ True.’

“ ‘ Here I am, grown up to man’s estate, nourished in the kindly soil of ‘ sweet home :’ and although I well know that there is no geography in the world so agreeable to study, as *the geography of up and down stairs at home, and from the parlour to the drawing-room*, yet I am of opinion, that when a hobbedehoy becomes cracked, (that is, in his throat,) or as Portia would say, when he speaks with a *reed* voice, (*buzz*,) he should think of placing his breast against the boisterous and buffeting storms of more active life.’

“ ‘ True.’

“ ‘ A lame leg is not the thing for a soldier or a sailor—or a soldier or a sailor is not the thing with a lame leg.’

“ ‘ True.’

“ ‘ —— or else, I swear by the trident of thirsty Neptune ! I would, long ere this, have cut Hippotades’ silver-thonged bag of winds, and faced the howling of the enlarged tempest, even as the adventurous Ulysses himself.’

“ ‘ It is probable you would.’

“ ‘ But if a man cannot say, ‘ the world is mine oyster, and with my sword will I open it,’ he must e’en call the world his something else, and endeavour to open this something else, with that weapon which he rather chooses to wield ; or, indeed, which the fates choose to place in his hands—(whether or nay, Mr. Thomas Collins)——’

“ ‘ If his microcosm should lie on the face of a sheet of paper, then let him open it with a pen, as the great Shakspeare did.’

“ ‘ Shakspeare ! Ah, or Johnson, since him.’——

“ ‘ True—or Wordsworth, one might add.’

“ ‘ And Coleridge too.’——

“ ‘ And Byron.’——

“ ‘ And Sir Walter Scott.’——

“ ‘ And fifty others !’——

“ ‘ Fifty ? ay, a hundred !’——

“ ‘ Ah, five hundred !’——

“ ‘ A thousand !’——

“ ‘ Ay, ten thousand !’——

“ ‘ Twenty thousand !!!’——

“ ‘ Or if it should be the church, let him open his pulpit-world with wholesome doctrine—words that will teach his fellow-labourers in the vineyard love to each other, honesty, upright dealing, and, above all, the essence of virtue’s sweet attribute—gratitude. That which will make a man feel his dependence and insignificance, and teach him to look beyond himself, and beyond the life in which he exists.” ’

Some authors hope to attract attention by short and striking chapters. Here is one of the most brief and striking which has ever come under my notice. The greatest lover of the short and sweet must be satisfied with it:—

“ CHAPTER XII.

“ What a horrible thing is sea-sickness !”

This actually forms an entire chapter in a recent work, and is diffused over a whole page ! Such writers must be prodigiously popular with the compositors, if with nobody else. This is what the latter call “ fat” work.

The same writer presents his readers with the following, as another chapter of his work :

—“ ‘ Beg pardon, gentlemen,’ said a third pedestrian, good-humouredly bursting into the room without ceremony ; and who, in the true vein of walking intellectualism, likewise carried a knapsack on his back—‘ Beg pardon, gentlemen, ’pon honour,’ said he, as he entered, and apparently believing that he intruded on two strangers.

“ ‘ Hullo !’ cried the lieutenant, starting up from his chair, as he recognised an old friend : ‘ Why, how the d—— did you come—— ?’

“ But the other interrupted him in a whirlwind of astonishment.—

“ ‘ Why, where the d—— did you come——’

“ ‘ The first held his sides and set up a sardonic roar of laughter.——

“ ‘ When the d——’ (cutting him short.)

“ ‘ Which road——’ (stopping him half way.)

“ ‘ How the d———’ (preventing him again.)

“ ‘ When——’

“ ‘ How long ——’

“ ‘ What the d——’

“ ‘ Where the d——’

“ ‘ Who the d——’

“ ‘ Which the d——’

“ ‘ How the d——’

“ ‘ What brought you——’

“ ‘ Did you——’

“ ‘ Have you come——’

“ ‘ How——’

“ ‘ When——’

“ ‘ Why——’

“ ‘ Which——’

“ ‘ Where——’

“ ‘ What——’

“ ‘ How far——’

“ ‘ Who——’

“ ‘ My good fellow——’

“ ‘ Did you——’

“ ‘ Have you——’

“ ‘ When——’

“ ‘ I say——’

“ ‘ How——’

“ ‘ What——’

“ —Pedrestres, for safety, pushed his chair aside out of the way.”

Alas ! had poor Sterne been alive he would have been ashamed to see himself so far outstripped by our author in the use of dashes, breaks, inverted commas, and so forth.

Let me give one more specimen of the efforts made by authors in modern times to attract attention to themselves and their works. Here is an entire chapter. It is one which every author could not write :—

“ ‘ Who are you, I wonder, that you should turn to, and abuse me in this way?’

“ ‘ You are a great rascal, and if you don’t hold your tongue and learn to be civil, I’ll very soon teach you.’

“ Bother, bother, bother, bother !—Clatter, clatter, clatter ! rattle, rattle, rattle !—

“ ‘ By jingo, Clavileno, what can all that quarrelling be about down stairs ?’

“ ‘ I’faith, I know not ; but words are running very high below.’———

“ Bow wow wow wow wow !—rattle, rattle, rattle, rattle, rattle !—

“ ‘ Just listen to them, they will come to blows directly.’

“ ‘ Suppose we go and see what is the matter.’

“ ‘ It sounds like two bickering, peevish men, sparring for nothing—just for the sake of disagreeing.’

“ ‘ Let us go down and ask them the cause of all this.’

“ Bother, bother, bother, bother !

“ ‘ Egad ! louder and faster than ever.’

“ Bow wow wow wow wow !

“ ‘ There they go again !’

“ Rattle, rattle, rattle ! Clatter, clatter, clatter !

“ ‘ Why, my good fellows, what is all this for ? Reason mildly on your grievances, ’beseech you.

Let me play the impartial umpire between you, —tell me your troubles: you are surely not quarrelling for a drop of drink? Tell me your disagreement—let me know it, will you? Let me endeavour to pacify you. Won't you answer me? Won't you give me a word? not one word? What! not turned sulky in a moment! Won't you answer? Are you dumb? Have you instantaneously lost your tongues?"

"The sullen fellows would give no further reply than will be found on the next two pages."

In illustration of the last remark, the author gives two pages of his book unsoiled by a single letter, meaning that "the sullen fellows" gave no answer at all. I have not ventured, for the sake of illustrating his peculiar views of writing, to follow his example. Let my reader only fancy that my next two pages are completely blank, and they will realise, in their own minds, the manner of this author. To give blank pages in this way, is an easy way of making up a book: it is a cheap mode of authorship. It is one, however, which readers in ordinary circum-

stances would not much approve of, though I am pretty confident they would not, in the case of the writer in question, even had one half of his book consisted of blank pages.

I have said I would proceed no further in my examples of the singular expedients resorted to by authors, with the view of attracting attention to their works. I may just mention, however, that not long since, an author seriously proposed to his publishers, that they should endeavour to prevail on some of the newspapers to allow an advertisement of his book to appear, in an inverted position,—as he was sure that would attract the attention of every reader in a special manner to the work. Whether the author in question adopted the hint from the American shopkeeper who, for the same reason, caused his signboard to be put up above his door, with the wrong side uppermost, is a point I have not the means of deciding.

CHAPTER IV

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS.

Literary remuneration of popular authors—Mistaken notions of authors as to the expected sale of their works—Imprudence of authors in publishing on their own account—“Gentlemen Publishers”—Illustrative anecdotes—Various arrangements between authors and publishers—Extent of the Editions of various kinds of works—Popularity of works—Expenses connected with the publication of books—Disposing of works to the trade—Number of publishers and booksellers in London—Advantages and disadvantages of popularity to an author—The fate of authors often dependent on purely accidental and trifling circumstances—An instance given—General remarks.

AUTHORS and publishers are so associated with each other in the appearance of literary works, that they may with the greatest propriety be

classed together in a chapter of such a nature as it is intended the present shall be.

In the previous chapter I have spoken of the exceedingly precarious character of the literary profession. My observations, however, will not have been understood as applying in every case. They do apply in the vast majority of cases ; but there are numerous exceptions. The case of Sir Walter Scott was an illustrious exception. His average income from his literary talents could not, for some years before his death, have been much short of 12,000/. : for he received 3,750/. for permission to print an edition of 10,000 copies of several of his novels ; and he ordinarily wrote three novels every year, besides his various contributions to periodicals. Byron, too, turned his genius to excellent pecuniary account. From first to last, it is understood that he received upwards of 20,000/. from Mr. Murray for his works. Moore also used to derive a large income from his intellectual exertions. For his life and works of Lord Byron, he is said to have received from

Mr. Murray 2,000*l*. Mr. Murray is understood to have given 2,000*l*. for the copyright of Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus." For the first volume of Colonel Napier's "History of the Peninsular War," the same publisher gave the gallant author the sum of one thousand guineas. It is calculated that Southey derives an annual income of about 1,000*l*. from his literary labours. There is no doubt, I believe, that Messrs. Baldwin and Cradock gave him last year 1,000*l*. for his *Life, &c.* of Cowper. That literature has proved, and ever will prove a very lucrative profession to those who have most distinguished themselves in its higher walks, will appear from a statement of the prices which many authors have received for their works.

Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer got, if my information be correct, no less a sum than 1,600*l*. for his "Rienzi," from Messrs. Saunders and Otley, who have also paid him similar amounts for several of his other works. The same publishers gave Captain Marryat 1,000*l*., or one thousand guineas, I am not sure which, for his

“Japhet in Search of a Father,” though the work had, in some measure, lost the freshness of novelty, through its previous appearance in the “Metropolitan Magazine.” Mr. Galt always got from 200*l.* to 300*l.* for his novels; and when any of them came to a second edition, he usually got something more.

I could mention several other instances, in which other authors have received *douceurs* from publishers, when the works reached second or third editions; but as the circumstance is by no means uncommon, it is unnecessary to refer particularly to individual cases. It is but right, however, to state, that this is, in some cases, more from considerations of good policy than from the mere impulses of a generous feeling. Publishers sometimes make authors presents of the kind referred to, as an inducement to write other works, of which they expect, of course, to have the publication. Let me mention one striking instance of genuine liberality on the part of the publisher to a successful author. Allan Cunningham was engaged to furnish

Mr. Murray with six volumes of his "Lives of the British Painters," &c. at 600*l.*, or 100*l.* each volume, for the "Family Library." He executed his task to the satisfaction of his employer and the public. Mr. Murray, on its great success, showed that he could appreciate merit by doubling his terms; in other words, by giving Allan 1,200*l.*, instead of 600*l.*, exclusive of a handsomely bound set of the "Quarterly Review," from the commencement of the work. It is to the credit of the trade, that while there are some publishers who would screw down a poor author to a scale of remuneration for his works which would render his social condition little better than that of a mechanic, there are others who are forward not only to appreciate, but suitably to reward his efforts. Messrs. Saunders and Otley* are favourably known among literary men for the liberality of their terms to writers of celebrity.

* This was written before the author was aware that Messrs. Saunders and Otley were to be the publishers of his work.

Messrs. Longman and Co. have, on several occasions, given a high rate of remuneration for literary labour. The case I have mentioned of Messrs. Baldwin and Cradock giving Southey so large a sum for his *Life of Cowper*, is one instance of their liberality. I know various instances in which Messrs. Whittaker and Co. have given large sums for works of merit; but from the way in which the information has been communicated to me, I am not sure it would be proper to make a public use of it. I am in the same situation in respect to the prices given by other publishers for particular works.

I have mentioned the sum which Allan Cunningham received for the volumes which he furnished to Mr. Murray's "Family Library." For his "Life and Works of Burns," in eight volumes, published by Messrs. Cochran and Macrone, he got 800*l*. Mr. Galt got from the same publishers, 250*l*. for his "Autobiography." The price which Mr. Robert Montgomery Martin received, from Mr. Cochran, for his "History of the British Colonies," in five volumes, was about 800*l*. Mr. Cochran gave

very liberal remuneration to literary men in several other instances which have come under my own immediate observation ; but it is not necessary to allude to them in detail. Mr. Willis got 250*l.* from Mr. Macrone, for his “Pencillings by the Way.” What Messrs. Saunders and Otley gave him for his “Inklings of Adventure,” I have not heard. The usual price of works of fiction, in three volumes, written by popular authors, has of late been from 200*l.* to 300*l.*: formerly it was higher; but, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, the falling off in the demand for works of that class has been so great as to render it hazardous for publishers to offer a higher sum than the above. As it is, comparatively few, even of those written by novelists of distinguished reputation, obtain a remunerating sale. In two or three late instances, novelists of the first class have got as high as 500*l.*, but the publishers have been losers by the transaction. Illustrated works, got up in the style of the annuals, have, in some recent cases, “fetched” a high price in the literary market. Captain Marryat, in 1835, received for his “Pirate,”

in one volume, no less than 750*l.*, from Mr. Heath, who has brought out so many illustrated works. And Mr. Bulwer, if I remember rightly, got 800*l.* for his “Pilgrims of the Rhine,” also in one volume.

It will be seen, from the above statements, that there are a few authors who reap an abundant pecuniary harvest, as well as a harvest of fame, from their literary labours; but they are only a few, compared with those who get nothing, or next to nothing, for their toil and trouble.

Authors of second or third-rate works of fiction, no doubt, think they are very inadequately remunerated when they receive from 100*l.* to 200*l.* for the copyright. What would they have thought of the price usually given half a-century ago for the same class of publications? At that time it was a rare circumstance for publishers to give more than 5*l.* or 10*l.* for the manuscript of novels, except in those cases in which the author had previously acquired a first-rate reputation as a novelist. The fact was, that publishers, fifty years ago, found that

the public taste was in favour of more solid mental food, and that the sale of novels was seldom sufficiently large to meet the necessary expenses of mere paper and print. For historical, philosophical, or any other class of works, however, conveying important information, when written by distinguished authors, the publishers of that period were in the habit of paying large sums. Dr. Hawkesworth got the immense sum of 6,000*l.* for his voyages round the world, though only a compilation. I do not at this moment recollect the number of volumes to which the work extended, but I think it did not exceed fifteen. Dr. Robertson got 4,500*l.* for his “History of Charles the Fifth,” in four volumes; and the same writer got 600*l.* for his “History of Scotland,” in two volumes. Smellie, the translator of Buffon’s works, got 1,000*l.* for his own work on the “Philosophy of Natural History.” Hume only received 200*l.* for his first part of the “History of England;” but that proving eminently successful, he got, in one shape or another, full 5,000*l.* for it, before it was

finished. Mr. Creech, the then Prince of Publishers, had the honour of bringing most of these works before the public. Mr. Creech, I believe, was the first publisher who ever paid for contributions to periodicals. The mode of making his first payment was curious. He sent two pipes of wine to Mackenzie, the author of the "Man of Feeling," as a return for various valuable contributions which the latter had made to a periodical, "The Lounger,"—if my memory be not at fault,—which then belonged to him. After that time, the same publisher commenced the practice of paying in money, which soon became general in the case of all respectable periodicals. I am indebted for this interesting anecdote to one of the sons of the celebrated author of "The Man of Feeling" himself.

Of all hopes there are none so illusory as those which are based on one's literary labours; and yet there are none in which authors are so apt to indulge. They are cheered and supported amidst all the labour they are doomed,

or, rather, which they doom themselves, to undergo, by the expectation of fame and profit. Almost every one flatters himself that the publication of his work will create a sensation in the literary world. The day of publication comes—and passes away too—and what does he find? The realisation of his sanguine and dearly-cherished hopes? No: but in all probability he hears nothing of his work except in the advertisements of the publishers, or, it may be, in a passing faint commendation given it in some review. He asks his publishers how it sells. The answer comes on him with the effect of a thunderbolt, as if launched by the hand of Jove himself—“It does not sell at all:” in other words, only a few copies have been disposed of. In the agony and mortification of the moment, he wishes, it may be, he had never been born; certain it is, he wishes his *book* had never been born. And yet, in the course of a year or two, if he have the means, you will find the unfortunate author, again continuing the midnight

toil, hoping against hope he will be more fortunate next time. Next time comes and he encounters the same disappointment, and so on to the end of the chapter.

The uninitiated will wonder, after what I have stated of the immense number of failures on the part of authors, how it happens that publishers undertake to bring out their works at all. The publishers are, generally, a shrewd class of men; and they do not incur the risk of publishing one half perhaps of the works which are daily making their appearance. The other half are published at the expense of the authors, many of whom lose a great deal in this way. A popular tragedian, about eighteen months since, published a novel, in two volumes, on his own account, which he had written. It never sold to the extent of twenty-five copies: he was a loser by his adventure to the extent of 200%. Several other similar miscalculations have been made by authors within the last twelve months. I know some instances in which the works were what is called heavy, that is, large in size

and closely printed, in which authors have lost nearly 1,000*l.* at once. Even in the pamphlet way, great losses are sometimes sustained. I lately heard the Rev. Mr. P., a metropolitan clergyman of the Church of England, mention that he had lost altogether 600*l.* by his various pamphlets against the Socinians and Roman Catholics. The Rev. Dr. Dibdin, in his “*Literary Reminiscences*,” lately published, gives some particulars of a rather interesting nature respecting his adventures in this way.

I would lay it down as a rule, and it will be found to admit of but few exceptions, that those who cannot afford, or who have not the disposition to lose money, should not risk the publication of a work which the leading publishers have declined to undertake on their own account. From what I know of the publishing trade, I can say with confidence that, taken in the aggregate, they are much more apt to err in accepting than in rejecting works. Take all those works which, when refused by the trade, have been published by the authors themselves,

and it will be found that not one out of fifty pays its expenses. These are odds sufficiently fearful, one would think, to make an author, to whom money is an object, hesitate before he engages in the speculation of publishing on his own account.

There is another class of authors, though their number is now much less than it was some years ago, who publish on their own account for very different reasons. They do so from that avaricious spirit which causes men to grasp at the profits of both author and publisher. A well-known bibliopole with whom I lately had some conversation on the subject, happily characterised such authors, as “Gentlemen Publishers.” It will be found in a number of cases, that those who publish their works on their own account, merely employing some bookselling house as their agent, are gentlemen of rank, and that they have previously received considerable reputation as literary men. This practice of uniting the functions of the publisher with those of the author, is not very reputable

in the cases to which I refer. It is not merely a violation of good taste, inasmuch as it is an intrusion into a field which they have no right to enter, but it is, practically, to all intents and purposes, an attempt to deprive a most meritorious class of individuals of the means of existence. The trade has suffered severely from these gentlemen interlopers.

It is idle to say, that though gentlemen become their own publishers, they must of necessity employ booksellers, as they cannot themselves sell every isolated copy of their works. All true; but the profit which an agent or deputy publisher is in this case allowed, is so small, that no respectable house could maintain its character with it. The commission, as I have before mentioned, allowed to the house which acts as agent, is usually only ten per cent. on the amount sold. With this sum the house is not only to be remunerated for the trouble to which it must put itself in the sale of the work, but it has also to defray the expenses of the establishment. The house must further run the risk of bad debts;

the author making no allowance for these. It is clear, I repeat, that on such a source of revenue none of our large publishing houses could long maintain their influence and respectability.

The circumstance which has of late led so many gentlemen authors to become their own publishers,—thus blending, in “discordant harmony,” as an Irishman would say, the character of tradesman with that of gentleman,—is the supposed “prodigious” profits which publishers derive from their trade. How far the profits of publishers are exaggerated, may be inferred from the fact, that very few of them, even after a very laborious application for many years to their calling, have succeeded in making more than a respectable livelihood. It is true they have very large profits in some cases. I know a late instance in which a house cleared about 1,200*l.* on two volumes, in little more than eighteen months; but then what is gained on the one hand, is often lost on the other. That a few enterprising houses have made handsome

fortunes by publishing, is not to be denied; but what are such instances, compared with the hundreds in which publishers have either failed in business, or only succeeded, by great care and exertion, in making the bare means of subsistence?

As regards the profits of the mere venders of books, very extravagant notions are also entertained by those unacquainted with the subject. Mr. Babbage, in his work on the "Economy of Manufactures," has done much to confirm and extend the error. The nominal profits of booksellers, in retailing literary works, is twenty-five per cent.; but this amount of profit dwindles down to a mere trifle, when due allowances are made for bad debts, for the number of copies which often remain unsold, and for the outlay of capital on which returns are seldom obtained sooner than twelve months; often not even in that lengthened time. Mr. Babbage says, that booksellers need not order books except when they are bespoke. Here Mr. Babbage, while assuming to be much better informed on the

subject than the rest of his fellow-men, betrays a degree of ignorance which would be discreditable to a schoolboy of the fourth or fifth class. Authors mourn over the lack of literary taste that obtains, as evinced in the limited sale of their works; but were Mr. Babbage's notions of bookselling generally adopted, their ground for lamentation would be increased in a tenfold degree. It is only by booksellers taking a number of copies of new works on chance, and then exhibiting them in their shops, and otherwise submitting them to the inspection of their customers, that the majority of copies are disposed of. Of all commodities, those of a literary kind stand most in need of what is called pushing; and if booksellers make the necessary exertion, take the necessary trouble, and incur the risk of serious loss from bad debts and unsold copies, it is but fair they should have a reasonable allowance made them.

But the trade are not the only parties injured by the practice of gentlemen publishing their

own works. In the majority of cases, these gentlemen publishers are serious sufferers themselves from their bibliopolic speculations. Poor Sir Egerton Brydges has lost a little fortune in this way. His "Autobiography" contains some useful admonitions to gentlemen publishers, grounded on his own experience, respecting the pecuniary disadvantages of authors publishing their own works. One may safely undertake to say, that though Sir Egerton were to live to the age of Methuselah, he would never publish another work on his own account. There are others I could name, and men of great reputation too, who have been out of pocket to a considerable extent by publishing on their own account, who, if they had sold their works to publishers, would have got a handsome sum for them.

The truth is that no author, whatever his popularity, can do the same justice to his work as regards the promotion of its sale, as a respectable publisher. The agent he employs has not the same inducement to exertion as if the property were his own, and consequently will

not make the same exertions to insure an extensive sale. It is in the bookselling world as in everything else—the greatness of a man's exertions will always be proportioned to the strength of the motive. No influential house, where they are only the agents, will ever call their full forces into play. They will only do that—they will only avail themselves of the aid of their various and powerful connexions in trade, when the property is their own, and the alternative of considerable gain or considerable loss affects themselves alone.

I could illustrate, by innumerable instances, the extent to which the success of a work is affected by the circumstance of whether it be published for the author, or for some respectable house. I will, however, confine myself to a single case. A literary friend of my own was some time since employed by one of the most influential publishing firms in town, to write a short treatise on a subject of general interest. The terms were high—twenty guineas per sheet. The work was written and printed, and every

exertion possible made to insure its success. The price was cheap, and the publishers having influential connexions in every part of the kingdom, the sale in the space of a few months exceeded 20,000 copies. The author, though in the first instance perfectly satisfied with the terms he received, grew discontented when he saw the extent of the sale, and deeply regretted that he had not published the work on his own account. He calculated the enormous profits the publishers must have made, and thought they would have been much better in his pocket than in theirs. Regret, however, was unavailing in so far as the past was concerned; but, as he conceived, a happy idea occurred to him as to the future. He would extend the work to other two parts, and publish it himself; in other words, he would join the brotherhood of gentlemen publishers. The house for which he had written the two first parts, heard of his being engaged on two additional ones, and offered him the same terms as before. He at once rejected them. They raised their offer to twenty-four guineas

per sheet; but he unceremoniously declined it, telling them he was determined on publishing the work on his own account. They disadvised him from the speculation, and pointed out the probable difference as to sale, between their extensive and powerful bookselling connexion, and his utter want of such connexion. The advice was disregarded: it was ascribed to interested motives. To press he would go, and to press he went, on his own account. The same number of copies, viz. 20,000, was ordered to be thrown off. The book appeared; it was largely advertised. What does the reader suppose was the number of copies sold in the same time as it required to dispose of 20,000 of the former parts, published by the influential house alluded to? It was considerably under 500!

The public have no idea of the activity, and tact, and influence, necessary to insure a remunerating sale to any literary work; and these, I repeat, are qualities which are only possessed in their combination by the most respectable publishing houses. The public, I may add, have no

idea of the extensive losses which many gentlemen publishers incur, who either overrate the merits of their own works, or underrate the difficulties which attend the publishing business. It is only two or three years, since I myself was consulted by the near relative of a well-known nobleman residing in the country, about the publication, in London, of a work of the former. I advised him to dispose of the copyright to some respectable publisher. He would not hear of the proposition; he looked at it in very much the same light as if I had seriously meditated an attack on his pocket. He would have it brought out on his own account, for no other reason in the world than that he wished to pocket all the fancied profits himself. He asked my opinion of what the extent as to the impression ought in the first instance to be: his own notion was that 2,000 was the lowest number of copies he should print. I advised him to content himself with 500. My counsel was looked on by him in very much the same light as a deliberate insult. Eventually, I got him per-

suaded to throw off no more than 1,000 copies. When, however, he concurred in my suggestion to that effect, it was only because he thought it would be an object to have another 1,000 printed immediately after, as a second edition. That a second edition would be called for in a few weeks after the publication of the work, appeared to him as certain as his own existence. In due time the work made its appearance; the agents were a respectable house in the metropolis; it was extensively advertised; but the agents had no special inducement to push its sale. Anxious to learn indirectly how the work was selling, the author desired a friend, who was in town, to get a copy of it for him from the agent's, without, however, letting his friend know (the work was published anonymously) that he was the author. His friend did call at a bookseller's, but not at the agent's for the work, and asked for a copy. The bookseller not having seen the volume, but confounding it with one similar in title, which had been published some years before, and the whole impression of which

had by that time been sold off, stated that the work the gentleman inquired for had been some time out of print. The author's friend immediately wrote to him that the work he had commissioned him to procure was out of print. It will readily be guessed with what sovereign contempt on receiving the letter, my literary judgment and my opinion of the wants of the reading public, were regarded. The author wrote by return of post to his London agents, to get a *second* edition printed forthwith, and dreaming of nothing but pecuniary profit and literary glory, desired them to send him a statement of his and their account. The agents, with the most provoking nonchalance, wrote in answer that they thought it would be in all good time to publish a *second* edition when there was some appearance of getting rid of the *first*; that the demand, if such it might ever be called, was completely over, no copy of the work having been called for for the last month, and that the entire number of copies sold was seven! With what surprise and horror the author received this inti-

mation, it is left to the reader to guess. The statements I have made are, I repeat, facts which came under my own immediate cognizance.

The late Mr. Johnson, of St. Paul's Churchyard, a well-known publisher of religious works, used to tell a laughable anecdote illustrative of the extravagant notions which authors often entertain of the demand there will be for their works. A clergyman called on him, and said that he wished him to be the agent for a volume of sermons, price 10s. 6*d.*, which he (the clergyman) had resolved on publishing on his own account. The bibliopole asked him how many copies he meant to throw off. "At least 10,000," replied the divine. The worthy publisher remonstrated, saying that 250 would be nearer the mark. "Two hundred and fifty!" exclaimed the theologian, in a tone of stifled indignation at the censure cast on his professional acquirements, as he thought, by the observation. "Two hundred and fifty!" Why there are at least 10,000 clergymen in the communion of the

Church of England, and every one of them will have a copy. Get me 10,000 copies printed," said the divine, with an air of self-importance, "and if they are not all sold, I myself will have to sustain the loss alone." "Very well," said the publisher, and the parties bade each other good morning. The volume of divinity appeared, and continued to be advertised in all the magazines and papers for nearly six weeks. In about three months after the publication, the reverend author came to town (he was the rector of a parish in Yorkshire) with the sole view of balancing accounts with his bookseller, and receive the anticipated profits. A statement of accounts was demanded by the clergyman, and instantly furnished by the other. It was substantially as follows :—

	£.	s.	d.
To printing and correcting	246	0	0
To paper	482	0	0
To boarding	180	0	0
To advertising	66	15	0
	<hr/>		
	974	15	0

Brought forward	974	15	0
The number of copies sold was 45, amounting, after deducting commission and allowance to the trade, to		15	15 0
<hr/>			
Making the balance due by author to his agents, &c.	£959	0	0

The rev. gentleman was quite horror-struck at this “statement of accounts.” He declared himself a ruined man by the result of his publishing speculation. The worthy bibliopole, seeing he had fairly convinced the divine how grossly he had over-estimated the demand for books, told him the account he had submitted to him was drawn out agreeably to the number of copies he had *ordered* to be printed; but that he, knowing better about such matters, had instructed the printer to throw off only 250 copies. A thousand blessings invoked on the head of Mr. Johnson, was the emphatic manner in which the reverend author expressed his obligations to his benefactor.

But of all men, Sir Walter Scott was the greatest sufferer, though not in the same way as in the case alluded to, from publishing on his own account. It is true, Sir Walter was not his own publisher altogether; but he was partly so. The profits of his later works were to be shared between him and his printer and publisher. These arrangements ultimately led to his engaging in other speculations, and to his acceptance of bills to a large amount. The consequence was, that Sir Walter got himself involved in pecuniary responsibilities for Mr. Constable to an extent which eventually proved ruinous. His pecuniary embarrassments preyed so much on his sensitive mind, as to bring on that disease of which he at last became the victim. Had the author of "Waverley" contented himself with entirely disposing of the copyright of his later works as he did of the earlier ones, for a specific sum, he might still have been the brightest living ornament of modern literature.

But pecuniary disadvantages are not the only evils which result to authors from the injudicious practice of publishing on their own ac-

count; their literary reputation also suffers severely from it. I have already shown, that authors can never do that justice to their works, in the article of sale, which publishers can. It consequently follows, that where books are not read, their merits cannot be appreciated.

It is no less obvious, that, literature itself is an equal sufferer from the practice I am condemning. Many a meritorious work has fallen still-born from the press, in consequence of the author becoming his own publisher. The result is, that not only is the work in question comparatively lost to the world of literature, but the author himself, disgusted with his failure, most probably resolves that he shall never again make his appearance in the republic of letters. I am convinced that the flame of many a bright genius has by this means been extinguished, which otherwise would have shone on the world with great splendour.

And here I must remark, that both authors and literature are under the deepest obligations

to publishers. I do not mean to say that a publisher can put brains into a brainless author, or can make the book intrinsically better than it is; but by his tact, his activity, and enterprise, he gives it an opportunity which it would never otherwise have had of being seen and read, and consequently of its merits, if it have any, being duly appreciated. So far, therefore, publishers have the making of authors, and so far they prove most efficient auxiliaries in the cause of literature. I hold that we are to a very great extent indebted to judicious publishers for many of the best and most popular works in modern literature. Had these works not made their appearance under the auspices of influential publishers, and been by them kept ingeniously and perseveringly before the public, their merits would have been but slightly known, and the books themselves consequently suffered to sleep in undisturbed oblivion on the shelf or in the warehouse. The authors, as a matter of course, would, as already hinted, shrink from a second

experiment on the literary discernment of the public, and fall back into that obscurity whence they had vainly endeavoured to emerge.

To establish my position still more clearly ; suppose Sir Walter Scott, instead of selling the copyright of "Waverley," which everybody knows was his first novel, to the late enterprising and influential Mr. Constable, had, like the gentlemen publishers of the present day, got it out on his own account, will any one who knows any thing of publishing maintain, that in that case "Waverley" would have met with a tithe of the success it did meet with as the property of Mr. Constable? And if it had not succeeded, the illustrious author would never have written another novel ; for he has expressly recorded, that it was put forward as an experiment on public taste, and that the circumstance of his proceeding in, or relinquishing for ever the new walk of fiction he had chalked out for himself, wholly depended on the reception which "Waverley" should meet with. To Mr. Constable, therefore, and to the circumstance of his having bought the copyright

of that novel, we are in one sense as much indebted, as to the author himself, for the most splendid series of fictions which ever emanated from the human imagination. No one was more sensible of this than Sir Walter himself; and no one could have been more forward to acknowledge it. I myself have seen several such acknowledgments under his own hand, made spontaneously to persons with whom he was corresponding. What a number of other authors are under equal obligations, in the same respect, to their publishers! I wish that they and the public were equally sensible of them.

From all I have said, it is demonstrably obvious, as already hinted, that the fortunes of literature are in a great measure in the hands of publishers. If their influence and respectability be not sustained and fostered by the confidence and liberality of authors, English literature must of necessity be a serious sufferer.

An arrangement is sometimes made between authors and publishers, which is a sort of medium between an author's publishing the

book on his own account, or disposing of it to a publisher. I allude to the practice of going half-and-half, as it is called. The parties agree that they shall equally share the losses, or divide the profits, or that the publisher take all the risk, just as the case happens. This has been found to work well, where the house is honourable, as it secures to the author the full benefit of the publisher's exertions. It has, besides, the recommendation of its being perfectly equitable. I have heard that Mrs. Jamieson's popular works have been all brought out in this way, very much to her satisfaction and advantage,

There is another arrangement between authors and publishers which has become very frequent of late. I refer to the practice of an author agreeing to let his publisher print a certain number of copies on certain terms; and in the event of the impression being got rid of, the copyright reverting to him. This is, perhaps, as fair an arrangement for both parties as could be made. If the publisher disposes of the edition, he is sure, from the terms he has made,

to have a fair profit; and it is optional for him to make a new arrangement with the author or not, just as he thinks the demand for the book is or is not likely to continue. If it be, then the author shares with his publisher the benefit of the proceeds from the new edition. It is on these terms that many of our most popular authors dispose of their works. The same kind of arrangement is becoming general among the most distinguished writers in France. Balzac never consents to the publication of any of his works on any other terms. No price which a bookseller can offer, will induce him to part with the entire copyright of any of his productions.

Another arrangement which is fair and equitable to all parties, is that of an author agreeing to make the amount of his remuneration contingent on the sale of the work. Supposing, for example, it were deemed probable that a work would reach a sale of 1,250 copies, the author, according to the arrangement to which I refer, would consent to take a given sum, say 100% on the day of publication, and make another 100%.

or 50l., according to the size and price of the book, contingent on the sale of 1,000 copies. The author, by such an arrangement, secures, as it is reasonable he should, a certain sum in return for his literary labours; while the publishers, by his consenting to make the remainder of the price agreed on conditional on a certain amount of sale, are not exposed to the risk of losing so much by their enterprise, as if they had had to pay down the entire sum unconditionally and at once. I do think it unreasonable on the part of authors to decline coming to terms with publishers unless they get the amount of money they are willing to take paid to them, without regard to the success of the work. I think it is all that can be reasonably expected of publishers, that they should, in addition to incurring all the expenses of publication, which are heavy, make the author such an advance, without reference to the sale of the work, as affords him a fair remuneration for his labour. I often wonder how authors, especially those who are in easy circumstances, could have

any pleasure in getting large sums of money for their works, when aware that the publishers are serious losers by them. I have no notion of publishers having by far the greater share of the profits of a work, when an author has spun his brains to some purpose; but neither, on the other hand, do I think it fair or reasonable, that authors should exact such terms of them, after they run all the risk of publication, as will leave them but a trifling profit, should the work meet with the expected success, but which, in the event of its not reaching the anticipated sale, will leave them with a loss. My impression is, that the most equitable arrangement for both parties, is that which, in the event of the book meeting with the expected success, gives to each, nearly as may be, the same amount of profit.

I have often heard the question asked, of what number of copies does an edition of a work consist? There is no fixed number: the thing depends entirely on circumstances. There is, however, a kind of conventional understanding on the subject among the trade. What would

be considered a large edition of one book, would be considered a small one of another. For example; a thousand copies of any of the "Standard Novels," &c., which Mr. Colburn and Mr. Bentley are severally publishing, at five or six shillings each, would be considered a small edition; while the same number of copies of any of the works, when originally published in three volumes at a guinea and a-half, would have been considered a large edition. It is always assumed, that in proportion to the cheapness of a book, will be the extent of its sale; and *vice versa*. Of very expensive books, the edition often consists of only 250 copies. Five hundred copies of a work published at half-a-guinea, or seven shillings and sixpence a volume, are considered a small edition: 750 copies of such works are considered a fair edition. That indeed is the number usually printed of novels, and other works of fiction, except where the great popularity of the author is supposed likely to carry off a larger impression. One thousand copies of such works, or of any works published at or about the same price, and containing a corres-

ponding quantity of matter, are regarded as forming a large edition.

The public are sometimes deceived as to the number of editions a book goes through. In various instances, a new title-page is printed, with the words "Second Edition," or "Third Edition," as the case may be, on it, while in point of fact a dozen copies perhaps, of the work has never been sold. I knew an instance last year in which a second edition of a half-guinea work was advertised, while in reality only nine or ten copies were sold. The object in such cases is to give the work a character, by conveying to the public mind an idea that it is in extensive demand. It is right, however, to mention, that not only are the majority of the respectable publishers incapable of practising such an imposition on the public themselves, but they will not be parties to it by allowing authors to practise it who have published their works with them by commission. In those cases where the words "second," "third," "fourth" or other edition, are seen in the title-page of any work which emanates from a respectable house, the fair pre-

sumption is, that the number making fair editions has been sold.

It is curious to reflect on the nature of the popularity of different works. Some rise into notice in the course of a few days, and are quite popular for a fortnight or three weeks, but after that time are never seen or heard of; they fall into as great oblivion as if they had never been published. The vast majority of our novels are among this class of works. No one ever thinks of purchasing a copy of any of these works, two or three months after its publication. The publisher, indeed, knows that if he do not obtain a remunerating sale within five or six weeks after their appearance he has made a bad speculation. What copies remain on hand after that time he looks on as little better than waste paper. He would be glad to dispose of them at a sixth or seventh of the usual price, were it not that it would prove injurious to the sale of his other works.

Other works often take some time before they attain any degree of popularity; but when they

have done so, they usually retain it much longer. It is generally some time before works of a scientific, philosophical, or historical nature command a tolerable sale ; but when they once get a hold on the public mind, they usually keep it for a length of time. The sale, however, even then, is seldom or never rapid ; it is slow or gradual, but steady.

The history of literature and bookselling abounds with instances in which a work has fallen still-born from the press, and yet at some distance of time has been, by some accidental circumstance, restored from the dead, and become eventually a part of our standard literature. Milton's "Paradise Lost," as mentioned in my last chapter, is a case in point. It was wholly unknown until Addison, by his criticisms on it in the Spectator, brought its beauties before the public eye. Another striking instance of the same thing occurred in the case of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield." It was, for some time after its appearance, so much literary lumber on the shelves of the bibliopole who

ushered it into existence. It dates its popularity from the accidental circumstance of Lord Chesterfield chancing to meet with it in the publisher's shop. His lordship was so struck with its merits, that he perseveringly recommended it to every person he met with, until it was fairly brought into notice. The only other instance I shall mention of the same thing, refers to a living author of great popularity. A good many years ago, he published a book in two octavo volumes, of an "Imaginary" kind, which was, perhaps, for some time, one of the most striking bibliopolic failures on record; for within twelve months of the publication of the work, only three copies were sold. At the end of that time it was brought into notice by an elaborate and commendatory critique in the "Edinburgh Review." Other periodicals followed the example of the Northern Leviathan, and eventually the book attained an extensive sale, and is now the groundwork of the author's reputation.

The expenses of printing books are pretty much - the same in all the respectable typographical

establishments in the metropolis. The usual charge for the paper and printing of 1000 copies of such a work as the present varies from 6*l.* to 7*l.* per sheet. This, of course, is exclusive of corrections : if the author makes any alterations on the proof sheets, when the work is going through the press, he or the publisher is charged according to their number or importance. The price of such a quality of paper as that on which this work is printed varies from twenty-six to thirty shillings per ream. Printing and paper, however, are not the only expenses incurred in the publication of a book. One very important item in those expenses is that of advertising. Unless a book be extensively advertised, there is little chance of its selling to any extent, whatever may be its merits. If a book command a fair sale without much advertising, there must be something extremely attractive in it. Some publishers are of opinion, that it were to incur an unnecessary expenditure of money to advertise a book which sells well without advertising. This is an error; for it will always be found,

that if a book sell well without advertising, it would have twice the sale if liberally advertised. No book is done any degree of justice to if not advertised to the extent of at least 80%. ; the sum usually expended by spirited publishers in advertising interesting books is about 100%. The best proof of the beneficial effects of advertising is to be found in the fact, that those houses which have once begun the practice of liberal advertising, invariably continue it. The amount of money which some of the larger houses expend in advertising their works in the course of the year, is little short of 5,000%.

A day or two before the publication of a work, some one connected with the house from which it emanates, goes round among the trade to show it them, and to receive, in a book kept for the purpose, the order for any number of copies which the various booksellers may be inclined to take. Messrs. Longman and Co. are always waited on first, as being the oldest established house in town. Messrs. Simpkin and Marshall, Messrs. Whittaker and Co., Messrs. Baldwin

and Cradock, Messrs. Sherwood and Co., Messrs. Hamilton and Co., Mr. James Duncan, and some other houses in the "Row," as Paternoster Row is always called, are then severally waited on. The number of copies which the different houses engage to take depends, of course, on the probable popularity of the book. Where the work is by an unknown author, the amount engaged for, or "subscribed," as it is technically called, is always small. It may be twenty-five, or fifty copies, according to the price and appearance of the book, and the nature of the subject. When, however, the new work is by a popular author, and is in the same walk of literature as that in which he has distinguished himself, the number subscribed is always large. Any new novel of Mr. Bulwer, for example, is sure to be ordered by the trade to a very great extent; perhaps to the extent of 1,500 or 1,800 copies. One of the largest subscriptions I have heard of for some years, of an expensive work, was that of one published in the winter of 1835. The number

ordered before the book was ready for delivery exceeded 2,000 copies. Paternoster Row is the great place on such occasions. Four or five copies of every book of importance are always sold there for every one in all the other parts of the metropolis put together. The large houses there supply the booksellers in other parts of the town, and the whole of the country, with every new book on the same terms as they would get it from the publishers, namely, at a reduction of twenty-five per cent. on the published price. The profit of the large houses in "the Row" arises from an allowance of five per cent. additional, which the publishers make them, coupled with the gift of one copy of the work for every twenty-five they order.

There is another way in which new works are sometimes disposed of to the trade. An extensive publisher who has several books in the press, or ready for publication, invites the leading men among the trade, by means of printed circulars, to a dinner sale, as it is called, in a particular hotel, on a given day. The works which are ready are shown, and the

names of the authors, the subject, the price, &c. of those which are not, are mentioned. Placed by an excellent dinner and an abundant supply of the choicest wines, in that happy frame of mind which leads one to look on the sunny side of the picture, it is no wonder if the merits of the various works are sometimes a little magnified, and the probable amount of the demand for them somewhat exaggerated. The principal reason for this method, however, is the selling a large quantity of books at once; and they are therefore on such occasions offered on very advantageous terms to the trade. The trade then put down their names for copies to be delivered when ready. Mr. Murray, and many others, do a great deal of business in this way. Mr. Murray has one great dinner of the kind every year, at which there are sometimes from one hundred to one hundred and fifty of the leading men in the trade. In the spring of last year, he sold new works, in one day, to the amount of nearly 20,000*l.* at one of these dinner sales.

The publishers and booksellers in the metro-

polis are very numerous. Perhaps the former, including those who only occasionally publish a small work or two, are about fifty in number. The number of the trade altogether, that is, including both publishers and booksellers, is estimated by Mr. Babbage, in his "Economy of Manufactures," at 4,000. As a body they are men of great intelligence; but as there are exceptions to every rule, so among the smaller booksellers there are several individuals who are by no means remarkable for the extent of their literary knowledge. I could give some amusing instances in proof of their ignorance of books and of literary men. When one of Dr. Wolcott's volumes of poems which, as everybody knows, were represented on the title-page as being the productions of "Peter Pindar," was in the course of being subscribed, the publisher, on submitting the work to one of the smaller booksellers, was accosted by the latter in these terms, and in a tone of serious indignation which heightened the ludicrousness of the reproof—"I will take no copies of the

work; and you may rely on it, it never will sell. Mr. Pindar has been dead* for more than one or two thousand years: he is quite forgotten now, and I think it was very foolish of you to disturb the poor man's bones. I don't like that sort of resurrection-work, and will have nothing to do with the book." When the new edition of Mr. Peter Cunningham's (son of Allan Cunningham) "Poems of Drummond of Hawthornden," was being subscribed, one of the same class of booksellers to whom the volume was submitted inquired of the publisher, whether this Henry Drummond of Hawthornden was any relation of Henry Drummond the banker, adding, that if he was, he would take a couple of copies, as he was sure the private friends of the author would insure the sale of the book to a certain extent.

The observation of Shakspeare, that "there is a tide in the affairs of men," holds eminently true of authors. A name is everything to them.

* The bibliopole had heard something of the Peter Pindar of ancient Greece.

Once an author has got a name—if Juliet had been an author she would never have asked ‘What’s in a name?’—it is his own fault in most cases if he do not make his way in the world. A popular writer, if he wish it, may dispose of his manuscript works to a publisher without the latter even seeing them. This, indeed, is often done. Nay more, surprising as it may seem, an author sometimes sells a work and receives the price for it too, before he has written a line of it; before, indeed, it has any other existence than in his own head. Sir Walter Scott in his anxiety to get the means of carrying into effect his darling improvements at Abbotsford, often got large sums of money in advance, on projected works from Mr. Constable, before a single line of the intended work was written. Mr. Constable often anticipated Sir Walter’s wishes in this respect. I saw a short time since a letter from that gentleman to the author of Waverley, in which, in reference to an observation of the latter, that he was employed in a work, to be in one volume, on

“Superstition and Witchcraft,” Mr. Constable said, that if he thought 500*l.* was sufficient for the copyright he might draw on him for that amount whenever he pleased. I may mention one other instance. A work by a well-known author having been very successful, and the publisher having met him one day at Brighton, he made him a handsome *douceur*, making the whole price he gave for his work 750*l.* Mr. S., after expressing his grateful sense of the publisher’s liberality, expressed a hope they should soon have another transaction together of a similar kind. The publisher responded to the hope, and said Mr. S. should have the same terms for anything else he wrote. The author and bibliopole shook hands, and bade each other good morning. Mr. S. wrote several other works of fiction, and received the same terms for them. In Mr. S.’s case I do not suppose there was any necessity to pay the money, or any part of it, in advance ; but several instances have come to my

knowledge, in which other publishers have in this way advanced several hundred pounds to improvident authors. It is a decidedly bad practice, and is sure, in the end, to lead to unpleasant differences between the parties. Publishers should set their faces against it: they are generally sufferers by it: so is literature. A book is never written so well where the author has received his money in advance and spent it. He has no pleasure in his labour, any more than the common mechanic who is working for a person to whom he is in debt. So far from regarding his task as a labour of love, he feels himself, for the time being, the slave of the publisher. Falstaff would do nothing on compulsion: the author in such a case feels his labour is nothing but compulsion; and he feels he must perform it, however reluctantly.

To be a popular author is not so enviable a distinction as most persons imagine. It has its pleasures, undoubtedly; but these are mingled with a large proportion of pains and penalties.

I will not specify these: they are too numerous for that. Suffice it to say that the repeated applications made to him to assist obscure authors, who are very numerous, and for the most part very poor, are not among the least. Let one of these be only introduced to a writer of celebrity and have a ten minutes' conversation with him, and, not content with boasting among all his acquaintances that the popular author is his particular friend, it is a thousand to one if he do not next day apply to him either for his subscription to some forthcoming work, or for the use of his influence with some publisher to get the applicant's book "brought out." What is the "distinguished writer" to do in the latter,—which is a most common case? If he decline in the most polite terms he can employ, to recommend the work to any publisher, the applicant's pride is wounded—for the poorer and more obscure the party, the greater is sure to be his pride—and he may expect to be heartily abused. If he do speak to a publisher, and prevail on him to go to

press, he becomes to all intents and purposes guilty of aiding and abetting the would-be-author, to pick the unfortunate bibliopole's pocket. Here is a dilemma for you. It is one in which literary men of distinction find themselves placed every day of their lives. Happily, in the great majority of cases, they prefer the alternative of wounding the pride of the would-be-author, to that of becoming a party to an attempt on the pockets of the publisher. Did they act otherwise, the result would be equally disastrous to literature and to publishers. As it is, we have literary trash enough of all sorts and in all shapes, as everybody knows; and publishers are, for the most part, sufferers by their speculations to as great an extent as their worst enemies could wish: let authors of reputation only induce bibliopoles to publish all the works on whose behalf their services are solicited, and we should not only have a deluge of nonsense in the form both of poetry and prose, such as the world never dreamed of; but in a few years there would not remain one of the existing


race of publishers; all of them would be involved in one common ruin. The bitter experience of many a bibliopole will cause him to respond to me when I say, that there are at present various writers who have entailed a world of mischief on publishers by using the influence they possess in consequence of their popularity, to force pure nonsense in the shape of manuscript, from would-be-authors, down their throats. They do it thoughtlessly, to be sure; but the results are not on that account less injurious to the bibliopoles. I would not have the sins in this respect on my head, which some of our most celebrated writers have on theirs, for all the laurels which adorn their brows. But publishers are not, in such cases, the only parties injured: you commit, in most cases, an act of inhumanity towards the would-be-authors themselves. You seduce them, as I mentioned in my last chapter, from the occupations, whatever these may chance to be, by which they earned their bread; for, once give persons of this description reason to believe you think

them literary men, and there is no use of them afterwards. Ordinary labour is below their notice: they will not stoop to it. They must ever afterwards soar in the lofty regions of intellect; and nothing but the gravitating tendencies of poverty and neglect can bring them down again to the level of the earth. Thousands of young men have been ruined for ever in this way. He who would do a humane and friendly turn to a poor person applying to him for his influence to get his book published, will, except in very extraordinary circumstances, advise him at once to give up all ideas of literary distinction, and devote his attention to his calling in life, be that calling what it may. If a shoemaker, urge him by all means to stick to his last: if a tailor,—though I doubt if literary aspirations be compatible with tailorifics—implore him to think of nothing but his goose; or, at all events, let such persons be advised, as Sir Walter Scott always advised them, as mentioned in my last chapter, when they applied in such circumstances

to him,—to make literature only an amusement for their leisure hours, never trusting to it for their daily bread.

Authors are often the mere creatures of circumstances. The most purely accidental matters have frequently decided the fate of some of the greatest literary geniuses which have ever appeared. History abounds with instances of literary men dating their success to circumstances which in themselves were of the most trifling and unimportant kind. I will not refer to any of these; but I may mention one which was lately communicated to me by a gentleman who was personally privy to it. All the extensive publishers have one or more gentlemen—"literary men" they are technically called—to whom they submit the manuscripts of such works as they themselves deem likely to command a remunerating sale. Publishers generally form their own opinion as to the attractiveness or otherwise of the subjects of the works offered them for publication; but they have not time, even were they always disposed to trust to their own judgment,

to read the manuscript so carefully, as to form an opinion of the merit of the literary execution. This, then, is the province of the gentlemen I have referred to as being in the employment of all the respectable houses. In the instance to which I refer, the publisher had two literary men in his employ for the purpose of reading the manuscripts offered him for publication. Some years since, a gentleman well known in the fashionable and military world, and who had in addition the magical appendage of an M.P. to his name, called on the bibliopole and begged to introduce to him a young gentleman, his friend. After the usual civilities had been exchanged, the latter stated the object of his visit was to see whether he and the bibliopole could come to any arrangement regarding the publication of a work which he had almost ready. Knowing that the young gentleman belonged to a respectable family residing in St. James's Square, and hearing him warmly eulogised for his literary taste by the gallant M.P. who introduced him, the bibliopole undertook the publication of the



work, and to give 200*l.* to the author without even seeing the manuscript. This was certainly an adventurous step on the part of the publisher, where the work was the author's maiden production. The author being in want of money, the bibliopole drew out a bill at once for the amount. In about a fortnight afterwards, the manuscript was sent to the publisher and he handed it over to one of his literary men, with a request that he would read it carefully and state his opinion of it; but without mentioning that he had already bought and paid for it. The gentleman called on the publisher some days afterwards, when the latter asked him whether he had read the manuscript.

"I have gone through the first volume,"* said the literary gentleman.

"And what do you think of it?" said the bibliopole, eagerly. "Favourably, I have no doubt."

"The greatest trash, without exception, I ever read," said the other.

* The work was a fashionable novel in three volumes.

The vender of literature turned pale. He was quite confounded, and a few minutes elapsed before he was able to utter a word. "You don't mean to say it's so very bad," he at length stammered out.

"It is, I assure you, the most consummate nonsense that ever soiled paper," observed the literary man.

The bibliopole rubbed his hands in an agony of mortification.

"But perhaps, though deficient in literary merit, it may display a knowledge of high life and consequently sell," he observed, after a momentary silence.

"A knowledge of high life!" exclaimed the other, making a wry face; "why, if we may judge from the style and sentiments of the work, the author knows no more about high life than if his occupation were to sweep the crossings."*

The bibliopole thrust his hands into his small-

* In order that the judgment of these literary men may be unbiassed, the publishers always conceal the name of the author of the manuscript.

clothes pockets, and made two or three hasty paces through the apartment.

“But you have not read the whole through: possibly if you finish the manuscript you may think better of it,” said the patron of literature, as he loves to be considered.

“Read the whole through!” exclaimed the literary man, “why, I would not wade through the other two volumes for fifty pounds. It is, you may depend upon it, the most unadulterated nonsense that ever emanated from the human mind.”

The bibliopole looked at a heap of papers which lay on the table, scratched his head, and then muttered out, “Well, bring me back the manuscript, if you please.”

The literary man quitted the place, and the poor publisher was left to ruminate on the folly, as he now thought it, of buying a pig in a poke. He vowed in his own mind that he would never afterwards purchase any work of an unknown author, without first examining the manuscript. But what was to be done touching

the 200%? The loss of the money haunted him like a spectre. While reproaching himself as the greatest fool in Christendom, his other "literary man" chanced to drop in. A thought struck the bibliopole. "Good morning, Mr. Thompson."

"Good morning, sir," responded the other.

"A gentleman has promised to send me the manuscript of a fashionable novel. Will you set to work and read it carefully through as soon as you can, and let me know your opinion of it."

"Certainly," said Mr. Thompson.

"I expect it here every minute," said the vender of literature. "I will send it to your house the moment it comes, as I am quite impatient to know what you think of it."

"It shall have my immediate and best attention," remarked Mr. Thompson.

The manuscript was forwarded to the latter, and carefully examined. His opinion of it was the very reverse of that of the other "literary man." He pronounced it the best work of fiction he had ever read, and assured the bibliopole he had

been entranced by it, and that it would create a great sensation among the higher classes, with whose habits the author manifested a most intimate acquaintance.

The patron of literature was now thrown into a state of utter perplexity. “Who shall decide when doctors differ?” was a remark he had often heard before, but the full force of which he had never until now experienced in his own person. To lose his 200*l.* was an evil of no ordinary magnitude; but it would have been a less evil than the loss of 500*l.* or 600*l.* by printing and advertising a book which would not sell. If, therefore, both his “literary men” had concurred in condemning the work, he would have consented to the loss of his 200*l.*, on the principle of choosing the least of two evils. Here, however, their opinions as to the merits of the book were the very antipodes of each other. If the judgment of the first literary man were correct, the loss incurred by the publication would be enormous; if that of the other were sound, the bibliopole must make a little fortune by the

work. To what decision, then, was the perplexed publisher to come? He waddled through the room, knit his brow, and heaved two or three broken sighs, as he thought of the dilemma in which he was placed. He had often experienced the sorrows of a publisher before; but here were sorrows of a new class, or, to use his own words, a “new series.” He thought with himself that if the unknown poet who begins his touching lines, “Pity the sorrows of a poor old man!” had been alive at the time, and been aware of his distressing perplexity, he would have made it—“Pity the sorrows of a bibliopole!” While in this pitiable state, an acquaintance of mine who was in the confidence of the publisher, chanced to call on him. “O, Mr. Thomas, I’m so glad you’re come!” he exclaimed as the other entered his room.

“What’s the matter?” said the latter.

“O these two rascals of readers! (another of his terms,) what a couple of vagabonds they are!” he answered.

“What have they done?” inquired Mr. Thomas.

“Why, the one pronounces a fashionable novel I have given him to read to be the most arrant trash ever penned, and says the author knows nothing of fashionable life; while the other represents the work as the best he ever read, and says the writer displays a most intimate acquaintance with the habits of the higher classes.”

“Well, that is differing with a vengeance, certainly!” said Mr. Thomas.

“It is, indeed,” observed the literary merchant; “and what am I to do between the two rogues?”

“Stop a moment,” said Mr. Thomas, putting his hand to his head, and looking thoughtfully. “Stop a moment! I think I know how you may decide at once as to whose judgment is to be relied on.”

“By what means can I decide the point?” said the bibliopole eagerly, his little countenance brightening up as he spoke.

“Of course you know the author?” said Mr. Thomas.

“O yes, certainly,” replied the perplexed publisher.

“Then you must know whether he be a man accustomed to move in the higher circles of society; and as the one literary man affirms that he knows nothing of the manners of the upper classes, while the other says he evinces a most intimate acquaintance with fashionable life, the fair presumption is that the one who is right as to that point, is also right as to the literary merits of the work.”

“Bless me! I never thought of that,” said the publisher, overjoyed at the discovery of Mr. Thomas, and amazed at his own stupidity in not having made it himself.

The literary man who pronounced the work to be one of transcendent merit, having been the party who expressed his conviction that the writer was in the habit of mixing with the upper classes of society, the bibliopole, of course, at once determined on publication. The work ap-

peared ; it made a great noise, and the author is now one of the most popular writers of the day.

In this anecdote we have a remarkable proof of the position for the illustration of which I have told it ; the position, namely, that circumstances, purely accidental, and of the most trifling nature in themselves, are often decisive of the fate of authors. But for the accidental circumstance of the writer having got the 200*l*. before the manuscript was read by the bibliopole's literary man, the work would most certainly have been rejected ; for the publisher would never have dreamed in that case, of asking the opinion of the second "reader." And as the bibliopole in question chanced to be at that time the only publisher of fashionable novels, the probability is that it would never have been published at all, and the author might therefore have abjured literature entirely and for ever.

Another singularly striking illustration of the influence which accidental circumstances of the most trivial nature, have on the fortunes of

authors, occurred in the case of Sir Walter Scott. His "Waverley" having been represented as not likely to sell by a party to whom it was submitted, it had lain five years in manuscript in a drawer, quite forgotten by him; and it was not until he one day stumbled on it, while looking for some fishing-tackle, that the idea of trying to get a publisher for it occurred to him. But for the trifling circumstance of Sir Walter, then Mr. Scott, having resolved on going out to fish on a certain day, the probability is his name would never have been heard of as a novelist; he had never published a page of that splendid series of works of fiction which has afforded so much intellectual enjoyment to the world. That many other distinguished literary geniuses have been lost to mankind through accidental circumstances preventing their being fairly brought before the public, is a fact of which no doubt can be entertained.

It is a curious reflection, but an undoubted truth, that so different is the mental temperament of different individuals, that what would for ever

crush one's aspirations as an author, is the very thing which would call forth another's latent powers in all their force. Had some authors been treated, on the appearance of their maiden production as Byron was by the "Edinburgh Review," they would have shrunk from the very idea of any future publication; whereas, the furious attack in question was the very thing which called into full exercise the gigantic powers of that extraordinary genius. Had the "Edinburgh Review" allowed "The Hours of Idleness" to pass unnoticed, the probability was, the little work would have sunk into oblivion, and Byron might never have made a second attempt at authorship.

There are two or three houses in the publishing trade which, in their dealings with authors, afford a remarkable illustration of Pope's celebrated couplet—

" 'Tis from high life, high characters are drawn;
A saint in crape, is twice a saint in lawn."

The houses to which I refer evince a marked predilection for the writings of noblemen and

persons of title. One of our Annuals, a few years since, prided itself on the circumstance of almost all its articles being written by individuals of rank,—just as if rank and talent were synonymous terms. The fortunes of the Annual in question rectified this erroneous impression; and the houses to which I refer have also learned from experience that a high status in society and a high status in literature are very different things. One publisher was, some years since, provokingly tantalised by a noble author, as well as doomed to be a serious sufferer in purse by his confounding literary merit with exalted rank. Lord Orton called one day on an enterprising bibliopole, and was shown into the sanotum of the latter. “I have come, Mr. Monthly, to see if we can make any arrangement about a book I mean to publish,” said his lordship.

The little countenance of the bibliopole brightened up at the very idea of “having the honour to usher into the world,” as he used afterwards to say in his advertisements of the book, a work by a nobleman.

“I shall be most happy to be your publisher, my lord,” said the patron of literature.

“But you have not heard the subject yet, Mr. Monthly,” said the noble lord.

“No matter what subject, my lord,” answered Mr. Monthly; “anything from your pen and with your name is sure to take.”

“You flatter me,” observed his lordship.

“Not at all, I assure your lordship,” said Mr. Monthly, making one of his own peculiar bows, and moving both his arms and both his feet at the same time.

“The subject is the late war.”

“My lord,” exclaimed Mr. Monthly, almost leaping off his feet in the ardour of his congratulations of the noble author at his choice of a subject; “My lord, it is an excellent subject—there could not be a better: it is the best in the world.”

“But I expect a very large sum for the manuscript, Mr. Monthly.”

“My lord, I shall have the greatest pleasure,

I assure your lordship, in giving you any reasonable sum," said the bibliopole.

"The work will be in two large octavo volumes, and I expect 1,500*l.* for the copyright."

"Fifteen hundred pounds! my lord," exclaimed Mr. Monthly, in a subdued tone, and with an altered expression of countenance, "Fifteen hundred pounds! That is a large sum, my lord; but," he continued, after a moment's hesitation, "but you shall have it, as I doubt not the work, with your lordship's name on the title-page, will have a large sale."

"Then I'll send my solicitor here to-morrow, to draw up a written agreement," said his lordship.

"Very good, my lord, I shall be happy to see him."

"Good morning, Mr. Monthly," said his lordship, as he quitted the sanctum.

"I wish your Lordship a very good morning," said the bibliopole, making one of his lowest and best bows.

Next day his lordship's solicitor called on the

publisher and got the agreement duly ratified. Mr. Monthly having first signed the paper, and then put his bills for the 1,500*l.* into the legal gentleman's hand, said, "Now, sir, perhaps you will favour me with his lordship's manuscript, that we may go to press directly."

"The manuscript!" exclaimed the solicitor, with infinite amazement. "The manuscript! why, did not his lordship tell you that he had not yet put pen to paper?"

Mr. Monthly turned as pale as the unsoiled margin of his own books, and with difficulty resisted an undefinable tendency to fall back in the chair from which he had just arisen to pay his respects to his lordship's man of business.

"I understood," said the disappointed bibliopole, as soon as he was competent to the utterance of a syllable, "I understood the manuscript was quite ready."

"That is a slight mistake," said the man of law. "It is all, as yet, snug enough in his lordship's head."

“This is a very awkward affair, sir,” said Mr. Monthly. “This is a grievous disappointment to me, sir,” he added.

“Well, the only thing that can be now done, I suppose, will be to spur his lordship on as much as possible.”

“But how long may he take to finish it?” inquired the bibliopole.

“That I cannot say,” answered the solicitor.

Mr. Monthly scratched his head, and lifted up, and threw down again two or three proof-sheets which lay on the table.

“I shall tell his Lordship you are very anxious about the manuscript,” said the solicitor, taking up his hat in his hand.

“I beg—I beg you will, sir; very impatient about it, indeed, sir,” remarked Mr. Monthly.

“Good morning,” said the legal gentleman, as he quitted the place.

Mr. Monthly was so overcome with disappointment and mortification, that it was with difficulty he muttered out a “good morning” in return.

Next day a note was sent to Mr. Monthly from the embryo noble author, requesting that he would send him all the works he had on the late war. The note was delivered by a friend of the noble lord who, it was stated, would wait for an answer.

“What! What! What’s the meaning of this?” said the bibliopole, his face colouring as he read the letter.

“His lordship wants all the works you have got on the war,” answered the bearer of the letter.

“I have not got a single volume on the subject. I never published anything on the subject,” said Mr. Monthly, in hurried, half-pro-nounced accents.

“Well, then, you must get them from some one else,” said the other, with provoking coolness.

“What does his lordship mean to do with them?” inquired the confounded bibliopole, eagerly.

“Why to write his book, to be sure!” was the reply.

I shall not attempt to describe “the confusion

worse confounded" which followed. Mr. Monthly had expected the volumes were to consist entirely of the author's own personal observations and official documents.

However, the bargain was made and the money had been paid, and he could not now help himself. It was a bad bargain, and as the proverb says, he felt he "must now make the best of it." He had committed a greater folly than that of buying a pig in a poke; he had bought the pig before it was in a poke, or anywhere else—before it had an existence,—unless, indeed, it could be said to have existed in the noble author's head.

Mr. Monthly accordingly collected all the books he could find on the subject of the war, and sent them up in a truck to the noble author's residence in May Fair. The noble lord handed them over, with all the official documents in his possession, together with some personal reminiscences, to a literary friend, and desired him to write the book. It was six months, however, before this was done; and several other

works having in the interim appeared on the subject, taken in conjunction with the specific gravity, as a chemist would say, of the work itself, it was such a decided failure that Mr. Monthly would have been a considerable loser by it, even though, instead of giving 1,500*l.* for the copyright, he had got it for nothing.

As still further illustrating the position with which I set out, namely, the importance which one or two publishers attach to the author's station in society, I may mention that, much about the same time as that at which the above transaction with the noble lord took place, a person called on the same publisher with a great quantity of manuscript, consisting of anecdotes of the most celebrated wits of the latter part of the last and beginning of the present century. The manuscript was carried in to the bibliopole, who was in his sanctum, by a friend with whom he used to advise on such matters,—while the author who had brought it stood in the front premises. Mr. Monthly glanced it over, and saw at once that it was admirably adapted for a periodical

in whose destinies he was deeply interested. "What does he ask for it?" said the bibliopole to his friend.

"He has not named his price, but I have no doubt from his appearance that he would be glad to take twenty pounds," was the answer.

"Oh, he is a poor fellow, is he?" inquired Mr. Monthly, eagerly, at the same time rising and taking a glance at the party through a small loop-hole in the partition.

"He is evidently hard up," said the other.

"Oh, that poor fellow will be glad to take anything he can get; try him with 2/," said the bibliopole, as he withdrew his eye from the loop-hole.

Two pounds were offered the poor fellow. He stated it was a great deal too little; but after hesitating for a moment or two, he said he must take it.

Authors may learn an important lesson from this anecdote, which is only one among many others of a similar kind I could tell. That lesson is, the importance of having, if possible, a good

coat on their backs when about to negotiate with some publisher for the sale of their literary works. I would advise authors, in such circumstances, who may not happen to have a good coat of their own, not certainly to steal one, but by all means to beg or borrow so useful an article before making their appearance in the sanctum of a publisher.

Some of the leading publishers often act on a principle which is injudicious for themselves and injurious to literature. I allude to the practice which is common to several respectable houses, of accepting the manuscript of an author, when they are perfectly convinced in their own minds that there is no probability whatever of the work commanding a sale which will do more than pay the expenses. In many such cases they, as might be expected, over-estimate rather than under-estimate the sale of the work, and are consequently losers to the extent to which the sale falls short of their expectations. But even where their expectations are realised, and the work barely pays the expenses, they are indi-

rectly losers by the speculation. Such works, however limited their sale, withdraw in a greater or less degree the public attention from books of real merit, and lessen the demand for them. The wisest course, therefore, for publishers to pursue, even regarding the question as one of mere business only, would be, never to undertake the publication of works for which they do not anticipate such a sale as will yield themselves a fair remuneration. By this means they would be enabled to pay more attention to those works of merit which hold out the prospect of a liberal sale and reasonable profits; and thus, by pushing the sale of such books, they would, in that proportion, be adding to their own profits. It is true, that a publisher may form an exaggerated estimate of the merits of a work, and of its consequent sale. To such cases my observations do not apply; they apply only in those instances in which a house undertakes the publication of a work, with the full persuasion on their own minds that it will barely pay its expenses. How

far literature suffers from this practice, I will not take upon me to say.

There is another error into which I think some of the leading publishing houses fall. It is an error which arises from a spirit of misdirected rivalry, and entails suffering on all parties. My allusion is to the practice which has been so common of late years among the leading houses, of bringing out important works as nearly as they can about the same time. If one house sees a rival establishment announce a work which promises to be popular, at a given time, such house very often makes a point of either delaying or accelerating, according to circumstances, some important work of which it may have undertaken the publication,—so as that it may appear about the same time as the other. I have often known three, sometimes four, interesting works brought out within a few days of each other, solely from this spirit of rivalry. The consequence is, that the public attention being distracted between

them, they all suffer to a greater or less extent ; whereas, if an interval of a few weeks had taken place in the publication, the public attention could have been exclusively given for a short time to each, and thus greatly increased the sale of all. I say nothing of the extent to which literature suffers from this injudicious rivalry among publishers ; because that, strictly speaking, is no matter for their consideration. I put the question wholly on the broad ground of business. I may be told that the number of books which are published in the course of a year is so great that two or three, from rival houses, must necessarily appear more or less frequently at a time. In answer to this, let me remark, that my observations do not apply to books taken in the mass ; they have a reference only to works whose interest and popularity are in some degree guaranteed by the name of the author ; and these assuredly are not so numerous that an interval of two or three weeks could not be suffered to pass, by a little arrangement, between their respective publica-

tions. I would throw it out as a suggestion to publishers, whether it would not be advisable, viewed merely as a matter affecting their own pecuniary interests, to come to some understanding with each other on the subject.

CHAPTER V.

BANK OF ENGLAND.

Historical sketch of the Bank—Its capital—Sources of its profits, &c.—Bank notes—Forgeries on the Bank—Dividends on stock—Recent alterations in the charter—Miscellaneous observations.

THE Bank of England, from the great influence it exerts on the monetary system of the country, is at all times a subject of deep importance to the community. At the present moment it is peculiarly so. The parliamentary investigation, a few years since, into the extent of its resources and the manner in which it manages its affairs, in conjunction with the existing crisis in the money-market, conspire to invest it with

a degree of importance it never before possessed.

In order that a subject of such commanding interest to all classes of the community may be properly understood, I shall briefly advert to the origin, constitution, history, and present position of the great establishment in Thread-needle-street.

The individual who projected the Bank of England was Mr. William Paterson, a native of Dumfries-shire. In planning the establishment, he was materially assisted by Mr. Michael Godfrey, an intelligent and respectable merchant in London. The object of the institution was, to use the projector's own words, "to save the ministerial people the disgrace of stooping so frequently to solicitations to the London Common Council, for the borrowing of only 100,000*l.* or 200,000*l.* upon the credit of the land-tax, as the common-councilmen did to the private inhabitants of their wards, going from house to house for the loan of money." It is not known when the idea of the Bank of England first occurred to Mr. Paterson ; but it

was not until after repeated applications for the sanction of government, and much discussion in the privy-council on the subject, that a charter was obtained. This was in 1693. The charter was limited to eleven years' duration, after which it was to cease and determine on twelve months' notice. The charter was obtained in consideration of the company advancing a loan to government, of 1,200,000*l*. The interest on this loan was fixed at eight per cent., with an additional allowance of 4,000*l*. per annum in lieu of expenses incurred in apportioning the interest among the subscribers. The charter prohibits the company borrowing under their common seal, unless with the special sanction of parliament; "nor are they to trade or suffer any person to trade for them in any goods or merchandise." The company, however, were authorised to deal in bills of exchange, in buying or selling bullion, in foreign gold and silver coin, &c.

Such are the circumstances under which the Bank of England originated.

The charter appoints that the management be vested in a governor, deputy-governor, and twenty-four directors, all of whom are to be elected by the proprietors possessing the requisite qualifications to vote. The possession of stock to the amount of 4,000*l.* is necessary to being chosen governor; 3,000*l.* to being chosen deputy-governor; 2,000*l.* to acting as director; while those only are eligible to vote in either of these cases who are shareholders to the amount of 500*l.*

By an act of the legislature passed in the eighth and ninth of William and Mary, the company were authorised to enlarge their capital stock to the extent of an additional 1,100,171*l.* 10*s.*; making their entire capital 2,201,171*l.* 10*s.* The interest on the additional capital was also fixed at eight per cent. It was at the same time enacted, that bank stock should be a personal and not a real estate; that no contract, either verbal or written, for buying or selling bank stock, should be legal, unless registered in

the books of the establishment within seven days of the transaction, and the stock had been duly transferred within fourteen days; and that it should be felony without benefit of clergy to counterfeit the common seal of the bank, or any sealed bank bill, or any bank-note, or to alter or erase such bills or notes. About the same time the charter was extended till the 1st of August, 1710.

In the seventh of Queen Anne, 1708, parliament empowered the Bank to double its capital stock; for which favour it made a further advance to government of 400,000*l.* without interest; thereby reducing the interest on the whole to six per cent. In return for this liberality, parliament further extended the charter to the 1st August, 1732. In 1714, the Bank made an additional advance to government to the extent of 1,500,000*l.* This last loan was most probably made in consideration of a still further extension of the charter to the 1st of August 1742, at this time agreed on by the legislature. At every new extension of the charter it was distinctly

specified that it would be terminable at the expiry of a specific period, on twelve months' notice.

The Bank agreed in 1717 to cancel 2,000,000*l*. of exchequer bills, accepting in return an annuity of 100,000*l*. The total advances now made to the state were, 5,375,027*l*. 17*s*. 10½*d*. To enable the Bank to make these advances, the directors were empowered to call from the subscribers, in proportion to the amount of their respective shares, such sums of money as in a general court should be deemed necessary. The penalty of non-compliance, on the part of the proprietors was, in the first instance, stopping the dividend of such persons, and the applying it to the payment of the money in question; and if the requisite advance was not made in three months, then the directors could sell such person's share to make up the amount required. The interest on the last loan of 2,000,000*l*. was afterwards reduced to four per cent.

In 1727, another act of parliament was passed authorising the Bank to purchase stock of the

South Sea Company to the extent of 4,000,000*l*. The interest on this sum was, in the first instance, five per cent., but in 1729 it was reduced to four per cent. To enable the Bank to effect this purchase, 4,400,000*l*. were allowed to be added to its capital stock, making the total advances it had made to government 9,375,027*l*. 17*s*. 10½*d*. while its undivided capital only amounted to 8,659,995*l*. 12*s*. 8*d*. This was the first occasion on which the Bank received interest from the public for a sum above its capital, and it has continued to do so, as will be afterwards seen, ever since.

In 1738, the Bank made another advance to government to the extent of 1,750,000*l*. The interest agreed on was four per cent. No consideration in return for the favour was made by government, either in the way of empowering the Bank to add to its capital, or by a further extension of its charter. In the year following, a yet further loan of 1,251,100*l*. was made to government at the same rate of interest as the preceding.

An act was passed in 1746 authorising the funding of exchequer-bills, issued in anticipation of the duty on licences for retailing spirituous liquors, to the amount of 986,800*l*. The rate of interest was four per cent. per annum. The Bank was at the same time empowered to increase its capital to the extent of ten per cent. The total amount of the advances now made to the state was, 11,686,800*l*.; while the undivided capital of the Bank was only 10,780,000*l*.; 3,200,000*l*. of the entire sum advanced to government now bore the reduced rate of interest of three per cent. : the remainder bore four per cent.

From this time until 1764 there was no further alteration in the terms of the charter, or in the Bank's accounts with the government; but in that year, agreeably to act of parliament, the Bank advanced 1,000,000*l*. for a term of years without interest, and also gave a bonus of 110,000*l*. to the exchequer, on condition of a further extension of the charter to the 1st of August 1786.

In 1781, the charter was again extended to August 1, 1802; on which occasion the Bank made another advance to government of 2,000,000*l.* at three per cent. interest. That it might be enabled to make this advance without any serious inconvenience to itself, it was empowered to increase its capital stock 862,400*l.*

Another extension of the charter to the 1st August 1834, was conceded to the Bank in 1800, as a ministerial expression of gratitude for an advance of 3,000,000*l.* in exchequer bills, the bills to be discharged without interest in 1806.

In 1816, a further advance of 3,000,000*l.* was made by the Bank to government; and in 1823 the Bank bound itself to advance the state the enormous sum of 13,089,419*l.* in thirteen irregular instalments, between the 5th April of that year, and the 6th July, 1828. The return for this was to be an annuity of 585,740*l.*, terminable at the end of forty-four years, from 1823. This is what is called the “dead weight

account." The entire amount of debt due by the state to the Bank at the expiry of the last charter was 14,553,000.*

So much for the gradual augmentation of the capital stock of the Bank, and the several advances it has made to the government. Its peculiar privileges are generally known. One of the most important of these is, that it has the sole right of issuing paper in London. Consequently, all other banking establishments in the metropolis must carry on their business with its notes. And in order still more effectually to protect the Bank from even the semblance of rivalry in the country as well as in town, an act was passed at an early period prohibiting all and every banking company within sixty-five miles of London from consisting of more than six partners; while no banking establishment in England can draw bills on London, or make its notes payable there, for less than 50/.

The Bank of England has, on several occa-

* It will be afterwards seen that a fourth part of this sum has been since repaid by government.

sions, been threatened with ruin from a want of public confidence in its stability. So early in its history as 1696, its tallies were at a discount of twenty to forty per cent. against its sealed notes, while the latter were at a discount of twenty per cent. against the standard coin of the country. The Bank was then saved from ruin, as it has been in more recent times, only by the interposition of government. At the time of the rebellion of 1745 it had to undergo another severe ordeal. A run was then made on it, and in order to gain time it resorted to the device of paying in shillings and sixpences. The retreat of the rebels and the interference of the merchants in London on its behalf, soon restored confidence.

But a more remarkable era in the history of the Bank was that of 1797. The progress of the French revolution, together with the then commercial position of our own country, seriously affected public credit; and the consequence was an unprecedented run on the Bank. That run was so great, and the quantity of gold

in the coffers of the establishment was so limited as to cause the greatest alarm in the minds of the directors. They clearly saw that if the demand for gold continued but for a few days longer — and it was then daily increasing — bankruptcy must be the inevitable consequence. They communicated their apprehensions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Government saw that the ruin of the Bank would of necessity be attended by the immediate destruction of public credit. What was to be done? There was no time for deliberation. Nothing but an instant suspension of cash payments could save the Bank or the nation. The remedy was a desperate one, but there was no other. Accordingly, on Sunday the 20th of February, an order in council was issued prohibiting the Bank from any longer paying in specie, until the sense of the legislature could be obtained on the subject. The subject was immediately brought before parliament, and the resolution of that body, including both Houses, was confirmatory of the expedient resorted to by the

privy-council. This was what is called the Bank Restriction Act, which continued in force until the bringing in of Peel's bill in 1819. Of the narrow escape the Bank had at the period in question some idea may be formed from the fact, that two days before the Restriction Act was passed, the whole amount of gold in its coffers was only 1,272,000*l.*, while its notes in circulation exceeded 8,640,000*l.* By the time the order in council was issued it is supposed the specie in the Bank could not have been more than 100,000*l.* or 200,000*l.* The alarm and consternation which followed the Restriction Act baffles all efforts at description.

The Bank was again on the verge of ruin in December 1825. With the circumstances connected with that frightful commercial crisis, most of my readers must be familiar. The run for gold which then took place continued for ten days, and so nearly were the coffers of the Bank being drained, that when confidence began to return, its exchequer did not contain 1,000,000*l.* in specie. It is a striking fact,

and one which ought to be made use of by the public, that while the gold in the coffers of the Bank did not thus amount to 1,000,000*l.*, its obligations to the country, in the shape of notes alone, exceeded 20,000,000*l.* It was admitted by some of the leading directors themselves, in their late examination before a committee of the Commons, that the stability of the Bank, at the period in question, appeared to be at least “suspicious.” One of the then leading ministers of the crown spoke on the subject in yet more decided terms. He declared, in his place in parliament, that on the 18th December, the day on which confidence began to be restored, the country was within twenty-four hours of barter.

The profits of the Bank of England are derived from a variety of sources. The profits for the year ending February 1832,* and the principal sources whence derived, are as follows:—Interest on commercial bills, 130,695*l.* — in-

* This is down to the latest period which I have access to official information.

terest on exchequer bills, 204,169*l.* — annuity for forty-five years, (the “dead-weight account,”) 451,415*l.*—interest on capital in the hands of government, 446,502*l.*—allowance for management of the national debt, 251,896*l.*—interest on loans on mortgages, 60,684*l.*—interest on the stock in the funds, 15,075*l.*—interest on private loans, 56,941*l.*—and lastly, profits on bullion, commission, rent, receipts on discounted bills unpaid, management of the business of the banks of Ireland, of Scotland, &c. &c., 71,859*l.*, making the total amount of its profits for the year ending February 1832, 1,689,176*l.*

The expenditure during the same period was: Salaries and pensions, 218,003*l.*—losses by forgeries and bankruptcies, 89,274*l.*—house expenses, 39,274*l.*—rent, 40,000*l.*—sundry allowances, 8,000*l.*—expenses at eleven branches arising from the banking department, 5,702*l.*—expenses attending the circulation of 2,000,000*l.* of the eleven branch Bank of England notes, 28,508*l.*—payment for stamp duties, 70,875*l.*, making the entire charges to be set off against

the above income, 499,549*l.*, and consequently making the net profit during the year, to be 1,189,627*l.* Of this sum, 1,164,235*l.* was divided among the proprietors at the rate of 8 per cent.; the balance of 25,392*l.* being carried to what is technically termed the “rest” account, in augmentation of their surplus profits. This “rest” amounted at the end of 1836 to 2,825,000*l.*

One source of the profits of the Bank has of late years comparatively dried up. I allude to that derived from the deposits made by government. What the amount of these was during the war, and what it has been since the peace, will be seen from the following tabular view of the balance of the public money in the hands of the Bank, from 1807 to 1831, viz. :—

<i>£.</i>		<i>£.</i>		<i>£.</i>	
1807	12,647,551	1816	10,807,660	1824	7,222,187
1808	11,761,448	1817	8,699,133	1825	5,347,314
1809	11,093,648	1818	7,066,887	1826	4,214,271
1810	11,950,047	1819	4,538,373	1827	4,223,867
1811	10,191,854	1820	3,713,442	1828	3,821,697
1812	10,390,130	1821	3,920,157	1829	3,862,686
1813	10,393,404	1822	4,107,853	1830	4,761,952
1814	12,158,227	1823	5,526,653	1831	3,948,102
1815	11,737,436				

The amount of deposits from private individuals during the same period, were as follows:—

£.	£.	£.
1807 1,582,720	1816 1,333,120	1824 2,369,910
1808 1,940,630	1817 1,672,800	1825 2,607,900
1809 1,492,190	1818 1,640,310	1826 3,322,370
1810 1,428,720	1819 1,790,860	1827 3,931,370
1811 1,577,920	1820 1,325,060	1828 5,701,280
1812 1,573,950	1821 1,326,020	1829 5,217,210
1813 1,771,310	1822 1,373,370	1830 5,562,250
1814 2,374,910	1823 2,321,920	1831 5,201,370
1815 1,690,490		

It will be seen from these tables that while the deposits of government have so materially decreased during the above period, those of private individuals have greatly augmented. On the deposits thus made with the Bank no interest is allowed.

From parliamentary documents recently published, I am enabled to give the following statement of the issues of the Bank, in notes and bank post bills, for upwards of a century past. It is of importance to premise, that the

amount of bank post bills is not above a twelfth of that of the notes.

	£.		£.		£.
1713	1,829,936	1803	16,847,522	1815	27,319,410
1730	4,224,990	1804	17,845,020	1816	26,594,360
1754	3,975,870	1805	17,226,932	1817	28,274,000
1763	6,889,680	1806	17,135,400	1818	27,220,000
1772	6,301,030	1807	17,405,001	1819	24,810,380
1783	6,707,540	1808	17,534,580	1820	24,220,770
1792	11,102,855	1809	19,001,890	1821	23,001,597
1797	11,191,720	1810	22,730,385	1822	18,142,470
1798	13,334,752	1811	23,547,525	1823	18,189,450
1799	14,062,387	1812	23,462,120	1824	19,736,686
1800	15,041,932	1813	24,087,000	1825	21,060,155
1801	16,169,594	1814	27,840,780	1826	23,673,737
1802	17,054,454				

The average amount of coin and bullion in the coffers of the Bank from 1815 to 1832, will be seen from the subjoined table. The disparity between the amount of specie in the exchequer of the Bank, and that of its notes in circulation, cannot fail to strike the reader.

	£.		£.		£.
1815	2,179,147	1821	8,174,419	1827	6,607,976
1816	3,399,114	1822	11,631,090	1828	10,201,253
1817	7,504,284	1823	10,254,698	1829	9,640,000
1818	11,109,381	1824	12,606,963	1830	7,285,000
1819	6,721,647	1825	11,858,595	1831	10,322,000
1820	3,969,528	1826	4,521,702		

It is of importance to observe that the above table only exhibits the average amount of gold in the Bank during the years which are mentioned. In the course of a very short period the fluctuation in its specie is often very great. For example, it will be seen, that in one part of 1825 the amount of gold in the possession of the Bank was as much as 11,858,559*l.*, while towards the close of the year it was, as before stated, reduced to less than 1,000,000*l.*

The position of the Bank at the commencement of 1832,* will be easily understood from the following statement:—

	<i>£.</i>
Exchequer bills	6,834,940
Amount advanced to government towards	
“dead-weight”	10,897,880
In return the Bank is entitled to receive	
from government annually till 1867 .	585,740
Government 3 per cent. stock purchased	
by the Bank	764,000
The bank holds of government	
3 per cent. stock	14,686,800
While there is due by the Bank	
to its proprietors, only .	14,553,000
Leaving a surplus of . —————	133,800

* I shall afterwards refer to its position at the present time.

Brought forward	500,000
City bonds	500,000
Mercantile bills and notes under discount	1,951,970
Lent on mortgages	1,452,100
Lent to the London Dock Company	227,500
Advanced on various securities	579,690
Coin and bullion in bank	5,893,150
Total of disposable assets	£29,626,030
Responsibilities of the Bank at the same period.	
Bank notes in circulation	18,031,710
Ditto, deposited in the Bank by government	2,034,790
Ditto, by bankers and other individuals	5,738,400
Due to government for balance of Audit	
Roll Exchequer bills deposited, and interest paid annuities	1,168,940
Surplus in favour of the Bank	2,637,160
	£29,626,030

I have mentioned in a previous part of the chapter the principal sources of the profits of the Bank. Another, though a very trifling one, is in the destruction of its notes by accident or otherwise.* It is also worthy of mention that

* The value of notes lost or destroyed may be recovered from the Bank, twelve months after notice, on giving a description of the numbers and dates on affidavit and an approved indemnity.

the Bank derives a small profit—though a very small one—through the eccentricities of some of the parties who hold its bank post bills. It is not long ago since an eccentric gentleman residing in Portland Street framed and exhibited in one of the apartments of his house, for five consecutive years, a bank post bill for 30,000*l*. It was only taken down and converted into money by his heirs, when he himself had crossed the well-known bourne of Shakspeare. It may at first sight appear strange that he should thus have exposed to the risk of being stolen an instrument representing so much money. But the fact was, that the circumstance of its being so exhibited was well known at the Bank, and any person, other than himself, presenting it in Threadneedle Street, would have been immediately pounced upon as a thief. Another bank post bill, from the concealment of which the Bank derived no inconsiderable profit, was discovered some years ago under very singular circumstances. In a house looking into Hyde Park, and now the town residence of a cele-

brated noble lord, a dispute chanced to occur one evening among a party of noblemen and gentlemen, respecting the meaning of a certain passage of Scripture. One of the party, repeating the passage, asked its meaning of a Dean of the Church of England who happened to be present. The clergyman, who had devoted fully as much of his time to the gaieties of the world as he did to the study of the scriptures, said there was no such passage in the Bible. A second difference of opinion among the party arose on this point, when the gentleman who introduced the subject said that if a Bible were given him he would at once point out the passage in one of the historical books of the Old Testament. The Bible which chanced to be nearest at the time was a quarto one which the mother of Lord R———, in whose house the party were, had been in the habit of daily reading, but which had been laid among other old religious books on a shelf out of the way, and had not been opened since her death some years before. On the sacred volume being opened, a piece of

paper was found in it which, on examination, turned out to be a bank post bill to the amount of 40,000*l*. These bank post bills, when paid at the Bank, are cancelled by the signature being torn off, and deposited in one of the apartments of the establishment appropriated for the custody of such instruments. The amount of money which some bank post bills represent may be inferred from the fact, that the author of "The American in England" states that when he visited the Bank in 1835, one of the servants put into his hand bank post bills which a short time before had represented the immense sum of five millions sterling. A friend of my own had shown to him, some years ago, when in the leviathan establishment in Threadneedle Street, 3,500,000*l*. in bank post bills; and, so limited was their bulk, that he put them all, with the greatest ease, into his waistcoat pocket.

The largest amount of a bank note in current circulation is for 1000*l*. But it is said, though I cannot pledge myself for the accuracy of the statement, that some time ago two notes

for 100,000*l.* each, and other two for 50,000*l.* each, were engraved and issued. It is added, that a plain butcher who had amassed an immense fortune in the time of the war, went one day with one of the 50,000*l.* notes to a private banking establishment, and asking the loan of 5,000*l.*, proposed depositing the note in the banker's hands as security; adding he had had it beside him for years. The 5000*l.* were of course forthcoming at once; but the banker hinted to the butcher the folly of losing the interest on so large a sum as 50,000*l.* by keeping a note for that amount in his drawers. "Voy, werry true, sir," said the latter, who was quite an illiterate man, "but I loikes the look on't so werry vell that I has got a t'other one of the same kind at home." Both the notes had somehow or other come into his hands, and he had determined not to part with them.

The next note under 1000*l.* is for 500*l.* There are others for 300*l.*, 200*l.*, 100*l.*, 50*l.*, and so on down to 5*l.*, which last amount is now the lowest. Previous to 1759, the Bank never

issued any notes of less value than 20/. That year it put a great number of 10/. notes into circulation. In 1793, 5/. notes were first issued, and in 1797, 1/. and 2/. notes were also brought into use when the Bank of England stopped cash payments. The currency of the latter ceased in point of fact in 1823, and in 1829 they were formally prohibited by act of parliament.

I have stated in a former part of this chapter that the Bank pays an annual average sum of 70,000/. to the Stamp Office, in the shape of composition for the stamp duty on its notes. Other banks pay a certain sum for every note as stamped, which renders it a much heavier tax on them than on the establishment in Threadneedle Street. While, therefore, the Bank of England never re-issues, but destroys all its notes on their return to it, the country banks re-issue theirs time after time until they have been worn to tatters. A gentleman largely connected with money and mercantile matters mentioned to me, a short time since, that on one occasion, when in the Bank of England, one of

the officers of the establishment showed him the remains of 40,000,000*l.* of notes which had recently been burned. This 'all that remained' of so large a sum was formed into a sort of solid substance. Its appearance was that of iron ore, of an irregular shape, and it was nearly as heavy. Its length was about three inches, its breadth two, and its weight, as far as he could guess, from ten to twelve ounces.

While the small notes were in circulation the Bank lost considerably by prosecutions for forgeries of those notes. In 1820, no fewer than 352 persons were convicted for this offence. Since their extinction its losses from the forgery of its notes have been quite trifling. It is otherwise with the forgeries committed on the public funds, for which the Bank, as being entrusted with the management of the national debt, is held liable. It transpired before the Select Parliamentary Committee in 1832, that the yearly losses of the Bank, from this source alone, average upwards of 40,000*l.* Its losses in 1803, from the frauds and forgeries of its principal

cashiers alone, were 340,000*l.*; and it is supposed that the forgeries committed by Fauntleroy must have cost the Bank a still larger sum. Some of the forgeries committed by the latter individual were equally characterised by their boldness and ingenuity. I may mention one communicated to me in December last, and which I have never seen in print.

Anticipating that a gentleman who employed him to transact his business for him, would call at his banking-house in Berners Street on a given day, he had prepared himself with a power of attorney to draw an immense sum the gentleman had in the Bank of England. Instead, however, of forging the signature of the gentleman before his arrival, he waited until he called and had seated himself on a chair. While so sitting, and eagerly engaged in familiar conversation with Fauntleroy, the latter adhibited the party's name to the forged power of attorney, and stepping into an adjoining apartment with the instrument in his hand, laid it down with the gentleman's forged signature wet upon it, on the desk of two

of his clerks to receive their signatures as attesting witnesses. Knowing the party was in Fauntleroy's apartment, and seeing the signature wet as if it had that moment proceeded from his own pen, suspicion of a forgery was of course out of the question. The principal clerk, on the attesting witnesses having put their names to the paper, dried the three signatures at once by the application of a piece of blotting-paper to them, and handing the instrument thus completed to Fauntleroy, the latter put it into his pocket on quitting the clerks' apartment. The gentleman had no sooner left the establishment, than Fauntleroy proceeded to the Bank of England and at once received the amount.

I have already mentioned that the yearly dividends on the capital immediately after the establishment of the Bank, was eight per cent. Since then the dividends have fluctuated considerably. In 1767, the dividend reached nine per cent. It afterwards gradually fell until, in 1729, it was as low as five and a-half per cent. From 1730 until 1747 it fluctuated

between six and five per cent. In 1753, it had fallen from five to four and a-half per cent, which is the lowest dividend ever paid. The highest was twelve per cent., which the shareholders received in 1805-6. From 1807 to 1823 the rate of dividend was ten per cent. For many years past, there has been no variation in the amount of the dividends; they have been eight per cent. from 1823 up to the present time. These, however, are not the only profits the proprietors have derived from their stock. They have at various times received bonuses to the amount of nearly 7,000,000*l.* or $57\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on their subscribed capital. I may here mention that to the original capital of 11,642,400*l.* there was added, in 1806, twenty-five per cent. from accumulated profits, making the capital what I have before stated it to be, namely, 14,553,000*l.*

In 1833, after a lengthened parliamentary discussion, the charter of the Bank was renewed for the term of twenty years, subject to the right of parliament to withdraw its exclusive

privileges, on payment of the debt the public owes it, after the year 1844, on twelve months' notice. This renewal, however, was accompanied by certain conditions disadvantageous to the Bank. It was stipulated by parliament that in consideration of the continuance, for the term in question, of its exclusive privileges, the sum of 120,000*l.* should be annually deducted from the sum allowed it for the management of the public unredeemed debt. It was also provided, that all promissory notes of the Bank, issued at any place out of London, shall be payable at the places where they are issued. Before this time the Bank had the right, which right the directors always took special care to exercise, of preserving an entire secrecy as to the state of its affairs. It was then decreed that the Bank should hereafter be compelled to transmit to the chancellor of the exchequer, weekly, an account of the amount of bullion and securities in its possession, and also the amount of its notes in circulation, together with that of the deposits. The legislature further rendered it

obligatory on the Bank to consolidate such accounts at the end of each month, in order that an average state of its accounts for the preceding month should, for the information and satisfaction of the public, be published every month in the London Gazette.

Among the other leading circumstances connected with the renewal of the Bank Charter, one was that one fourth of the debt due by the public to it, should be repaid in the year 1834. The sum of 3,938,250*l.* was accordingly repaid that year by an assignment of three per cent. stock, previously held by the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt. The sum thus rendered available to the proprietors has not been divided amongst them, but has been left in the hands of the directors as capital. The debt now due by the public to the Bank is 10,914,750*l.*

Parliament, in renewing the charter of the Bank, conferred some new advantages on that establishment. It has made bank notes a legal tender everywhere except at the Bank itself, and

its branches. It has also repealed the usury laws in so far as regards all bills of exchange and promissory notes, not having more than three months to run. The Bank has likewise gained by the act of 1833, by certain alterations in the law restricting any other banking establishment with more than six partners, from issuing notes payable to bearer within 65 miles of London.

In a previous part of the chapter I brought down the position of the Bank to 1832. Not having access to official documents for the intermediate years, I pass them over and come to the state of matters in the last quarter of the year just ended.* The stock of bullion† was then 4,545,000*l.*, the circulation 17,361,300*l.* and the deposits were 13,330,000*l.* I have no means in this case of distinguishing between the private and public deposits. As the latter part of the year 1836 was a period of unusual pressure in the money market, the de-

* This was written in January last.

† The amount of silver held by the Banks is usually about one fifth of that of gold.

crease in the stock of bullion, as compared with the stock in hand at the end of 1835, is 2,081,000*l.*, and the falling off in the deposits, as compared with the returns for the last quarter of 1835, has been no less than 3,339,000*l.* In the amount of circulation the variation has been remarkably small. It shows an increase of 40,000*l.*

The directors are bound down by the constitution of the Bank not to deviate from certain regulations in the administration of its affairs. They are prohibited from purchasing houses or lands, or investing any part of the stock in property of that or a similar nature. Their transactions on behalf of the Bank must be strictly of a monetary nature.

It is a very common but very erroneous notion, that the Bank of England is a bank of discount. It professes to be nothing of the kind, though it does discount bills to a certain extent. It represents itself to be only a bank of support; that is, an institution to support other banking establishments in times of difficulty and danger,

and through them the commercial credit of the country. How far it realises the object it professes to have in view, is a question on which a difference of opinion prevails. My own impression is, that though it has doubtless often acted beneficially for the commercial interests of the country, by the support it has afforded to other establishments when suffering severe pressure, it has, on the whole, either through the ignorance or caprice, or both, of the directors, inflicted the deepest injury on the trade and commerce of Great Britain. But on this point I shall afterwards have occasion to make some observations.

The average discounts of the Bank to mercantile men are extremely limited, considering the magnitude of the establishment. They have not, for the last twenty years, exceeded 2,000,000*l.* The largest extent to which the Bank ever discounted commercial paper, was 20,070,600*l.*; this was in 1810. The lowest amount of commercial paper under discount in Threadneedle Street, was 919,900*l.*; this was in

1830. In less than two years the Bank, on one occasion, reduced its mercantile discounts to the enormous extent of about 11,000,000*l*. This was in the crisis of 1816-17, when its aid was most needed. In 1815 the amount of commercial paper under discount was 14,947,100*l*.; in 1817 it was only 3,960,600*l*. The average annual losses of the Bank on its mercantile discounts, do not exceed 40,000*l*.

One principle theoretically laid down by the directors in managing the affairs of the Bank, is that they shall always have a stock of bullion on hand, equal in amount to one-third part of their liabilities. From this principle, however, they often find themselves obliged, by the force of unexpected circumstances, to deviate. The pressure on the money market in the latter end of last year, coupled with the unfavourable state of the exchanges, drained the coffers of the Bank to such an extent, that at one period the stock of bullion was only equal to about one-eighth, or one-seventh, part of its engagements. At other critical periods of the monied and com-

mercial markets, the gold in the coffers of the Bank has borne a still greater disproportion to the Bank's liabilities. To some of those periods I have already referred in detail; but though the amount of gold in the Bank often bears no proportion to the extent of its arrangements, and though the Bank be consequently exposed to the danger of stopping payment in periods of great monetary excitement, its ultimate solvency, is a matter beyond all doubt, if we could suppose it possible,—which, however, as I will afterwards show, we cannot do,—that its stoppage would not be followed by a total destruction of public credit.

Ever since the riots of 1780, when the mob contemplated an attack on the Bank, it has been constantly guarded by soldiers. With a view to the security of the establishment from fire or other casualties, the greatest possible precautions are taken.

The proprietors meet four times a year, when an abstract of the existing state of matters is submitted to them. Those, as formerly men-

tioned, who possess 500*l.* of stock, are entitled to speak and vote on all questions which may be brought forward for discussion. Three of the directors sit daily in what is called the parlour of the Bank. . On Wednesdays a court of ten directors always sit to decide on all London applications, in the shape of notes or bills, for discounts. On Thursdays the whole court meet, when all notes exceeding 2,000*l.* are brought under consideration. All matters of importance are decided by a majority of the directors. Their number, I have already stated to be, exclusive of the governor and deputy-governor, twenty-four.

There are few sights, perhaps, better worth seeing in London than that of the interior of the Bank of England. However enlarged may have been the stranger's ideas of the extent of the establishment, the actual thing itself is sure to exceed them; he fancies, when taken from one apartment to another, that he is never to see the whole place; and he wonders as he goes from one part of it to another, and sees so many persons busily employed in them all, how there

can be occupation for so many. But that department of the Bank which, as might be expected, strikes the stranger with the greatest astonishment, is the large room, where the ordinary transactions of paying in and taking out money occur. The number of individuals employed in this department of the Bank alone, is, I should suppose from a rough guess, from seventy to eighty. Then there is the everlasting bustle caused by people coming in and going out, on the outside of the counters. This department, indeed, has all the appearance of a market-place. There is a crowd of persons constantly present, and they are always moving about as if on the open streets. But the most interesting sight of all, and that which is sure to rivet the stranger's eye as fixedly as if there were some charm in it, is the quantity of gold he sees lying scattered on all parts of the counters, coupled with the large bundles of notes he sees in the hands of the payers and receivers. Sovereigns lie here and there in heaps, like so many mountains in miniature. Addison de-

scribes in his own simple but expressive language, the annoyance which the poor peasants in the South of Europe must feel, when they see the oranges growing in such numbers on the trees around them, and yet dare not touch one of them. I have often thought the feeling of a person with an empty purse, who sees sovereigns in such abundance on the counters of the Bank of England, and yet dare not finger one of them, must be something similar; and, as if to aggravate this feeling, he sees the clerks throwing them about with an air of as much seeming indifference as if they were mere lumber. The extent of business done in this department of the Bank in the course of a day, is great beyond what any one could previously imagine within the bounds of probability. I am assured by one who has been many years in the establishment, that in the article of sovereigns alone, keeping out of view bank notes, a quarter of a million will sometimes exchange hands between the Bank and its creditors, in the course of the eight hours the establishment is open. I have heard

the entire amount of money, including bank post bills, &c. which is turned over, on an average, in one day at the Bank, variously estimated. The lowest estimate is 2,000,000*l.*, and the highest 2,500,000*l.* The quantity of business arising from private accounts is very great; the number of these varies as a matter of course. I believe it is at present between twelve and fourteen thousand.

I have spoken of the surprise amounting to bewilderment, which a stranger feels on his first going through the Bank of England. Those who visit the establishment to receive the dividends on the public funds, are so bandied about from place to place before they finger the money, that they feel the necessity of a guide as sensibly as if they had lost their way in some unknown region. It is quite common to see persons asking the way from one particular department to another, just as a stranger in the metropolis does the way from one street to another.

I have said that on all occasions the principal apartment of the Bank is crowded with persons

busily engaged in paying away and receiving money; but to see the business done at the Bank to the greatest advantage, it is necessary to visit the establishment on the first day on which the half-yearly dividends are payable. The scene which is then exhibited is indeed worth seeing. All the apartments for the various kinds of stock, and the passages leading from one part of the establishment to another, are crowded with persons of both sexes and of all classes. One may, on such occasions, philosophise to some advantage on human nature. A large proportion of those who draw their dividends on the first day on which they are payable, are persons who live up to their incomes, if not above them, and who choose rather to get into debt than to touch their stock. There are others who are misers, and whose sole delight consists in adding one sum to another. Such persons usually make a point of drawing the amount of their money the moment it becomes due; their eyes feast on the very sight of gold. Then, see the diversity of characters, and the

varied circumstances of those that have money in the funds. You may, on dividend day, see persons receiving their interest on large sums, for whose entire wardrobe you would not give sixpence, and whom, had you met them outside, your first impulse, if you have any feeling of compassion in your bosom, would have been to give them a few pence to preserve them, as you would have fancied, from absolute starvation. Who would believe it, yet such is the fact, that among those who have large sums—in some cases two or three thousand pounds—in the funds, are the sweepers of the crossings in our leading London thoroughfares? The circumstance of a black man, who for many years swept the crossing at the Fleet-street end of New Bridge-street, having at his death left a large sum of money to one of the late Alderman Waithman's daughters, because she had been in the habit of giving him something every time she passed,—is well known to many. A more recent case of the money-accumulating propensities of these crossingsweeps, occurred a few months ago. If a para-

graph which appeared in most of the public journals was to be credited, the old man who swept the crossing for the previous twenty-five years at the Scotland Yard part of Whitehall, left behind him 1,600*l*. Let not the mention of these two cases of rich sweepers of the crossings, have the effect of leading any one to the conclusion, that all these gentry must have saved money. Perhaps nineteen out of twenty of them barely contrive to live from hand to mouth. I only allude to these instances as being apposite illustrations of my position, that on dividend day you will see at the Bank of England, drawing the interest of large sums, persons generally supposed to be in the most indigent circumstances.

I have sometimes endeavoured to form an estimate of the number of persons who receive their dividends on the first day of every half-year on which they are payable; but it is difficult to come to any very confident conclusion on the subject. I am satisfied I am under the mark when I say it exceeds ten thousand; perhaps I

should not be far wrong, were I to compute the sum paid away by the Bank on that day as dividends, at 500,000*l.*; but of course nothing like certain data to go on in such a case exists, so that this is only to be regarded as a rough guess.

The number of persons employed in one way or other in the Bank of England is so great, that they may be said to form a little community of themselves. The number of clerks alone, though occasionally varying, is never under 900. The number of engravers, and printers of notes, in the constant employment of the Bank, is 38. The salaries of the clerks vary from 500*l.* down to 75*l.* per annum. The entire amount paid to the various servants of the establishment, about 1,000 in number, is upwards of 200,000*l.*

Every one has his own department in the Bank, and no one knows what any of his colleagues are about. Two clerks may have stood for years next to each other, as regards the locality of the establishment, and yet know no more of one another's business than if they were in

the service of different employers. Perhaps there are few establishments in the world which afford a better exemplification of the accuracy and regularity which may be secured in the most extensive and most complicated concerns, by the adoption of a proper system of business.

It is a general remark, that the stability of the Bank of England must be co-existent with that of the British government itself. The position can only be admitted with certain qualifications. It is true, that the holders of bank stock, whether in the shape of notes or otherwise, have in one sense the security of the state itself for cash payments, inasmuch as government is debtor to the Bank to an amount approximating to that of the obligations of the latter to the public. But then it is of importance to recollect, that though the holders of bank stock might, and probably would, at all hazards, eventually lose nothing, yet it were quite possible, indeed certain, in the event of the Bank stopping payment, that the entire credit of the country would be destroyed, long before government could dis-

charge its obligations; while the necessary consequence of this destruction of public credit, would be the interposing of new obstacles to the state meeting the claims of the Bank, or of the public through the Bank. Supposing, for the sake of still more clearly illustrating my views on this important subject, that there were to commence immediately such a run on the Bank as would in one little fortnight drain it of its last sovereign, what or where would be the use of its applying to government for the payment of either the whole or a part of the 10,954,750*l.*, which the latter owes it? It is well known that government has not got an ounce of gold in its exchequer wherewith to meet any such demand. It is no less clear, that if in the assumed circumstances the Bank were to stop payment—which it must of necessity do, unless rescued from ruin by another Restriction Act—and that its creditors were to apply to government for the sum it owes the Bank, their application would be perfectly useless. Government in such a case, would like a private individual who may,

between debts due to him and other property he possesses, have more than would ultimately meet his obligations, though he cannot meet them at the moment,—government, in such a case, would require to ask time of the country. And how, let me ask, until some arrangement were come to, would the creditor of the Bank, and through the Bank, of the government, manage to carry on his own business? The stoppage of the Bank, it is clear as the sun at noon-day, would prove as completely destructive of public credit, and would as seriously derange the commercial relations of the country, as the failure of government itself.

As regards the way in which the Bank conducts its business, a considerable difference of opinion obtains. It is admitted on all hands that the directors are men of integrity, and are consequently actuated by the best intentions in all their measures; that is, that they are disposed to serve the public, where they conceive it can be done consistently with their own interests. The *judgment* with which the Bank

has acted on several most important occasions, is another question.

I hold that to the injudicious procedure of the Bank, was chiefly to be ascribed the frightful commercial convulsion of 1825—a convulsion which well nigh involved in one common ruin both the Bank and public credit. The conduct of the establishment in Threadneedle Street, some time previous to and during part of the appalling conjuncture of that year, was in direct violation of all the most obvious principles of banking. Over-trading, a spirit of speculation, &c., are usually assigned as the causes of that crisis? What led to this spirit of over-trading and reckless speculation? The abundance of money, and the consequent facility of obtaining discounts, is the obvious answer. Whence, then, this abundance of money? Why, principally from the excessive issues which the Bank of England made of its notes a short time previously. In the short space of two years,—namely, from February 1823 to February 1825, the Bank increased its issues to the enormous

amount of 8,200,000*l.* The country banks, which at that time invariably followed in the wake of the lady of Threadneedle Street, "went," as the scripture expression has it, "and did likewise." The precise extent to which these had increased their issues, we have no means of knowing; but it is understood that, on the most moderate calculation, it could not have been under from 30 to 40 per cent. Here then the currency of the country was clearly in excess; the consequence was, as already hinted, that any man with a tolerable coat on his back, whatever his character, found no difficulty in obtaining money; and it was with this fictitious capital that the mining and other joint-stock companies of the day were formed and carried on, until the bursting of the bubble. Another necessary effect of this excess in the currency, and one which contributed not a little to aggravate if not accelerate, the crisis of 1825, was the large exportations of British gold, which a little before took place to foreign countries. In the short space of three months, namely, in April, May,

and June, of the year just mentioned, the exportations of our gold to other countries, entered at the Custom-house (not to mention what must have found its way out of Great Britain through other channels,) were to the almost incredible amount of 2,834,000*l*. This was the first intimation the Bank seems to have had, or rather the first intimation it understood, of the serious error it had committed by the excessive issues of its paper. The directors naturally took the alarm at this rapid exportation of gold, and immediately began a sudden contraction of their notes. They at the same time saw, with but too great clearness, that the failure of the joint-stock speculations of the day was matter of certainty. This induced them to call in their notes with accelerated speed. In a few months they contracted the currency of the country to the extent of 3,500,000*l*. The results were precisely what might have been expected; public credit all at once received a severe shock. The notes of the country bankers—that body were always the first sufferers in a time of panic—

were returned upon them; and when they applied to the Bank of England for assistance in the hour of their difficulties—difficulties, be it recollected, as I have already mentioned, into which they were led by that establishment—it haughtily and peremptorily refused to afford them the most slender aid. It did more: not as yet aware of the full extent of the fiery trial which awaited itself, it actually converted their embarrassments—from which, with a little timely aid, they would soon have recovered—into the means of crushing them. Seventy of these establishments failed in a few weeks. The crisis which ensued spread over the width and breadth of England; and the country did not for years recover from the shock its credit then sustained.

So far my remarks have been condemnatory of the procedure of the Bank. There was one very important step it took when the crisis of December 1825 was at its height, which deserves all praise. In a few days of that month it increased its issues from 17,000,000*l.* to 25,000,000*l.*, making an addition to the cur-

rency of the country, in that short time, of 8,000,000*l*. On one of the days of the crisis, the Bank discounted mercantile bills alone to the number of 4,200. My praise of the Bank, on this occasion, however, must be qualified with this remark that it thus saved the country because it saw the impossibility of otherwise saving itself.

My observations respecting the disastrous results which are from time to time entailed on the credit and commerce of the country, by the injudicious conduct of the Bank, have as yet been brought no further down than the crisis of 1825. Unfortunately, at the very moment I write, fresh proofs of my views on the subject are forcing themselves on the public attention under the most appalling circumstances. What is the state of credit in London at this moment? Is it not worse than it was ever known at almost any former period? There seems to be no such thing as confidence among commercial men. Houses which have undergone the vicissitudes of more than half a century, and which, so far from being enfeebled by the changes of that long

and eventful period, grew stronger and stronger every successive year, have either fallen within the last few weeks, or are understood to be in a tottering condition. I may be told that the blame of this does not lie at the door of the Bank. I maintain it does; and no one will hold a contrary opinion who understands the subject, and is not prejudiced by some means or other in favour of the establishment of Threadneedle Street. The Bank and its friends have sought to fasten the blame of the existing crisis on the joint stock banks. It is not for me to vindicate them from imprudencies; it were folly to pretend they are immaculate; but I am thoroughly satisfied that the joint stock banks, so far from having either produced or created our present commercial embarrassments, have been, taken in the aggregate, the means of averting still more disastrous results. Had they followed the Bank of England in its sudden and unexpected contraction of its issues, I am satisfied there would have been no such thing as public credit in the country at this moment. It is to the fact of the

joint stock banks continuing to afford that aid to commerce which they had been extending to it before the country was overtaken by the existing crisis, that we are to ascribe our escape from calamities of a still more fearful magnitude than we are now encountering. To me it is also perfectly clear, that whatever errors the joint stock banks have committed of late have, as in the case of the country banks previous to 1825, arisen from their following in the track of the establishment in Threadneedle Street. They were, undoubtedly, excessive in their issues in the latter part of 1835, and the first six months of 1836, but the reason why they were so liberal in their discounts was because the Bank of England had set them the example.

Are doubts still entertained as to the soundness of my position, that the present commercial convulsion is to be traced up to the imprudent conduct, to call it by no harsher name, of the Bank of England? Then, perhaps, the best way to remove those doubts would be to point to the situation of the great American houses at this

moment. Will any one pretend that the joint stock banks had anything to do with bringing about the difficulties with which these houses now find themselves surrounded? Will any one be bold enough to deny that the establishment in Threadneedle Street has been the sole architect of all the calamities which have befallen those firms? It may, it is true, be said that they had speculated far beyond the amount of their capital. And what firm, or merchant in an extensive way, I should like to know, does not do this? There is not, perhaps, a commercial establishment of any note in the country, that does not, to a greater or less extent, at sometime or other, speculate beyond its available capital; and there are not many establishments in the country which could withstand the effects of such treatment as that which the American houses have received at the hands of the Bank. It is to this treatment, and not to any undue over-trading, though that perhaps was greater than was strictly prudent, that the American houses are to attribute the difficulties in which

they are now placed. Had the same facilities been afforded them as before for carrying on their business; had their paper been discounted as promptly as formerly, these houses would have gone on as usual, and we should never have heard a word, perhaps, of their spirit of over-trading. But so far from this, their paper, though as good as ever, was, from some caprice or other on the part of the Bank directors, scornfully rejected: and hence they were quite unexpectedly, and all at once, plunged into those difficulties which have proved fatal to some, and threaten to end in the ruin of the others.

I may be told that the Bank is now coming forward to their assistance. In doing so it is only, so far as regards those houses, adding insult to injury. The assistance of the Bank in this case may be useful to itself, and there can be no question it is beneficial to the public; but as respects the American firms, it deserves not the name. It is rather synonymous, considering the circumstances and the terms, with ruin. The conduct of the Bank resembles that of a man

who first breaks his neighbour's head, and then sets to work apparently to tinker it, but leaving it after all when done, so damaged that it never can be the same head it was.

This is not the place for anything in the shape of discussion on questions of political economy; but I may be allowed to remark, that the conviction is at length beginning to force itself on the minds of all reflecting, unbiassed men, that the currency and credit of the country cannot with safety be long entrusted to the irresponsible junta who preside over the destinies of the establishment in Threadneedle Street. Measures must be taken, and that ere the lapse of any lengthened period, to denude the Bank of its exclusive privileges. The monopoly it has so long had over the monetary affairs of the country must be broken up: until this is done, our trade and commerce can never be established on a solid foundation. The very knowledge that the extension or contraction of the currency is solely dependent on the caprice of a body of men, many of whom are ignorant

of the first principles of legitimate banking, is of itself enough to paralyse all mercantile enterprise. Were the conduct of the Bank guided by any fixed, well-defined principles, persons engaged in trade and commerce would know how to regulate their own affairs; but as no such principles, though laid down to a certain extent in theory, are embodied in practice, painful experience has taught mercantile men that they are completely at the mercy of the Bank, and that their best laid schemes of commercial enterprise may be completely frustrated in a moment and at a time least expected.

It is much to be regretted that the legislature should in 1833 have renewed the charter of the Bank at all, especially on the terms on which it has been extended to 1844. The fact of Parliament having granted a perpetuation of its monopoly to the Bank for the period in question, and on terms so advantageous to that establishments, show that either our legislators know very little or care very little about the public interests. But the question suggests itself,

whether, seeing that the public interests have been sacrificed to those of the corporation in Threadneedle Street, the charter of the Bank ought either to be withdrawn or modified? I confess that to me it appears it would be much more desirable, if it can be done without any serious injury to the public, to allow the Bank to enjoy its charter, without any alteration or modification, till the time of its expiry. A contrary course would only have the effect, unless some very peculiar emergency should arise, of lessening public confidence in acts of Parliament. The legislature having once granted certain privileges, for a specified time, to a body of men, ought to keep faith with that body, unless, as just mentioned, some very extraordinary circumstance should arise to justify a contrary course. But though it appears to me desirable in the highest degree, that whatever may be the errors of the Bank—provided always they be not absolutely and necessarily fatal to public credit—faith should be kept with it, yet government and the legislature would not only

be justified in affording every encouragement to such other establishments as are likely to act as a check on the abuse of the exclusive privileges of the Bank, but they are bound by considerations of their duty to the public to afford such encouragement to the establishments in question. The joint stock banks have been of unspeakable advantage in restraining the establishment in Threadneedle Street from doing yet greater injury to credit and commerce; and therefore, they are specially entitled to the protection of the government and the legislature of the country.

END OF VOL. I.

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**THE
GREAT METROPOLIS.**

**BY THE AUTHOR OF
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COMMONS.”**

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

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THE Stock Exchange is a place of which one hears every day in the year, and every hour in the day, and yet very few know anything of

it beyond the simple fact that it is the place where all the transactions in the funds occur. It is situated in Capel Court, nearly opposite the door at the east end of the Bank leading to the Rotunda. It is the property of a joint-stock company, and is a speculation which has turned out well for the shareholders. It was erected more than a quarter of a century ago. Before the present building was appropriated to transactions in the funds, those transactions took place in a house in Threadneedle Street. And it is a fact worthy of being mentioned, that though no exception has ever been taken to the business done in the Stock Exchange on the ground of the illegality of the place, that business actually is illegal. By an act of parliament which has never yet been repealed, it was ordained that all buying and selling of the public securities should take place in the Rotunda of the Bank. By a sort of common consent, however, the members adjourned from the Rotunda to the late Stock Exchange, and thence to the present, there they

have remained ever since, no one troubling himself about the legality of their transactions.

The regulations which relate to the admission of members are numerous. Under the first general head of "Admissions," they are seventeen in number. Then comes the "Appendix to Admissions," in which are specified the forms to be gone through by every candidate for membership. The regulations are stringent as well as numerous; so strict that one would be apt to suppose that no man could ever cross the threshold of the house who was not a very exemplar of all that is praiseworthy in private morals and in public conduct. There is a committee for general purposes, in whom the right of admission is vested for one year, from the 25th of March of any year till the 25th of the following March. A re-election of members takes place every year, previous to the 25th of March. The election always takes place by ballot. The form of application is by letter, addressed to the secretary of the committee for general purposes. The applicant must state his name and

residence, and furnish the address of his bankers. He must also signify his readiness to regulate his conduct as a member of the Stock Exchange by those conditions and rules which have been already, or may afterwards be, adopted for the government of the members generally. Every person applying for admission who happens to be in partnership with another, must sign a separate application for himself; and he must state distinctly, that neither on his own account, nor as the partner of any firm, is he engaged in any business other than that usually transacted at the Stock Exchange.

No new application is ever attended to by the committee unless the party applying be recommended by three persons who have been members of the house for at least two years. Each of the parties so recommending an applicant, must not only have fulfilled all his own engagements as a member of the house, but he must enter into an engagement to pay the sum of 300*l.* to the candidate's creditors in case such candidate, after his admission, shall be publicly declared

a defaulter either in the Stock Exchange or Foreign stock market, within two years of the date of his admission. The 900% of securities thus forfeited are applied to the liquidation of the defaulter's debts. The only instances in which these conditions are departed from are, first, in the case of a person who had been previously a clerk in the house for four years, or been a member of the Foreign Stock Exchange for three years immediately preceding, and had fulfilled all his engagements therein. Second, where the applicant has been a member of the foreign house for five years prior to his application, and discharged all his engagements therein, and whose character will at the same time bear the test of a rigid examination. Third, where the candidate is a foreigner not naturalised, or not having letters of denization. In the first case, it is only necessary that the party applying be recommended by two persons, each of whom enters into a security to the amount of 250%; in the second, the candidate is admissible on the recommendation of two of the managers of the foreign house, being also members of the

Stock Exchange, or by two of the committee for general purposes,—in neither of which cases will the parties giving the recommendation be required to enter into any security at all. In the third and last case of exception to the conditions and regulations just mentioned, the party is held to be inadmissible, unless he has been a resident in the United Kingdom for five years immediately previous to the date of his application for admission, and unless he is recommended by five members of the Stock Exchange, each of whom must enter into his own security for the fulfilment of the applicant's engagements to the amount of 300*l*.

In order to guard against improper recommendations from an expected participation in the benefits to be derived from membership in the Stock Exchange, by the persons recommending any party for admission,—it is stipulated, that the candidate must not, after his admission, enter into partnership with any of the individuals recommending him for the period of two years after the time of admission, unless additional security, to an equal amount,

be provided for the time which remains unexpired. On the same ground the recommendation of one partner by another will not be attended to, nor the security of any one such partner for another be accepted. Supposing the richest and most influential member of the Stock Exchange were to recommend his partner for admission, not the slightest attention would be paid to it.

Bill and discount brokers are now specially excluded from the Stock Exchange: other departments of business are denounced in general terms. Neither must the applicant's wife be engaged in any sort of business whatever. This regulation has sometimes caused a good deal of merriment in the city.

The committee, very properly, have a great horror of bankrupts. No party applying for admission, who has been a bankrupt, or has compounded with his creditors, shall be eligible until two years after he has obtained his certificate, or fulfilled the conditions of his deed of composition, unless, indeed—a case which is a perfect rarity in these degenerate times—he

shall have paid his debts in full. It is also distinctly stipulated that no applicant who has more than once been a bankrupt, or more than once compounded with his creditors, shall be eligible for admission until he has paid his debts in full. This is manifestly telling the poor fellow that he must "all hope abandon" of entering the house in Capel Court: why do not the committee act in a straightforward manner, and tell him so in so many words? Who ever heard of a man who had been twice a bankrupt, and twice compounded with his creditors, paying them in full? We expect to see no such gratifying spectacle until Robert Owen's bright visions of a new and perfect state of society have been realised.

The committee are hard customers to deal with in other respects than those I have mentioned. To make assurance doubly sure as to the character and circumstances of the candidate for admission, they will not be satisfied with the mere testimony or engagements of the parties recommending him, but put the following questions to himself: "Is this your signature?" (showing

him his letter of application.) Have you read the resolution* on the back of the letter? Are you a natural born subject? Are you of age? Are you engaged in partnership? Are you, or is your wife,† engaged in business? Are you a clerk in any public or private establishment?" In addition to these questions, the committee reserve to themselves the right of asking him, whether he has ever been a bankrupt, or whether he has ever compounded with his creditors, &c. &c.

But the regulations of the Stock Exchange are not strict merely as regards the admission of members; they are no less so as respects their continuance there; so that if a candidate

* The following is the resolution alluded to :—" That whenever the creditors of any defaulter shall represent to the committee for general purposes, or whenever it shall otherwise appear to the said committee, that the conduct of such defaulter has been dishonourable, or marked with any circumstances of impropriety, the said committee have the right to cause the name of such defaulter to be affixed to the black-board in the Stock Exchange."

† That is, of course, provided he has one.

fancy that he has got over all the unpleasant circumstances, when he has received intimation of his being elected, he will find himself very much mistaken. He must, while a member, recollect the homely adage of not hallooing before he is out of the wood, which he never can be so long as he is in Capel Court; consequently, he must not halloo at all. He will find that it is no sinecure, or mere matter-of-course affair, scrupulously to observe the rules and regulations to which he engages to conform his conduct in all his transactions as a member of the house. There are many of these regulations which relate only, properly speaking, to himself; that is to say, if he infringes them he only suffers in his purse the same way as, in the ordinary transactions of life, a man suffers who makes an illegal bargain, or does something else which is contrary to the law. For example, if a member make any bargain beyond the regular hours of business, which are from ten to four, the committee will not recognise that bargain, in the event of the other party taking advantage of the

infringement of the rules, as a valid transaction. Another regulation affecting a broker's own purse is, that which provides that no bonds can be returned on account of imperfection, which have been kept longer than three days. There are various others of a similar kind, affecting the member's own pecuniary interests; but it is not necessary I should advert to them in detail. In those cases in which a member transgresses the regulations of the committee in such a way as to affect the interests of other brokers or the body generally, he incurs the penalty of expulsion. I may mention two instances in which he renders himself liable to be expelled. If, finding himself unable to perform his engagements, he arrange privately with his creditors, and the circumstance becomes known to others, his name is to be at once affixed on a particular part of the Stock Exchange as a defaulter, and as an expelled party. A public failure also exposes the defaulter to expulsion; but then he is eligible for re-admission after the lapse of six months, provided he pay from his own resources

at least one-third of the balance of any loss that may occur on his speculations, whether on his own account, or on that of principals.

The cases in which members may transgress the rules, though the penalty annexed is not so severe as expulsion, are a great deal too numerous to mention. Not the least terrible of the penalties incurred, is that of having one's name written in legible characters on the black board kept for the purpose, and publicly exhibited in the place. This punishment can only be inferior in severity to the ancient one in many country towns, of having one's person exhibited in the pillory to the gaze of the mob, and the being pelted by various rotten commodities and nameless dead animals into the bargain. What aggravates the evil is, that it is not necessary in order to having a member's name chalked up on the black board, that any substantive offence beyond that of having failed, be proved or preferred against him. It is enough that the committee for general purposes come to the conclusion—no matter by what means they ar-

rive at it—that the conduct of the defaulter has been dishonourable.

The ceremony of declaring a defaulter is an awful one to the unfortunate party himself; so very awful, that he always takes care to be at a reasonable distance from the house on the occasion. One of the waiters, before announcing the name, calls attention to it by giving two or three “tremendous blows” with a hammer on the wainscot. The noise which everlastingly prevails in the place, as will be afterwards seen, renders the aid of the hammer necessary to make the waiter heard. When a temporary calm has been produced, he announces the name of the defaulter, who from that moment dare not show his face in the house until he gets his affairs managed, on pain of receiving personal treatment of a nature compared with which being roughly tossed in a blanket would be gentleness itself.

The committee,* which consists of thirty mem-

* Either proprietors or subscribers are eligible to office, and the right of election is equally possessed by proprietors and subscribers.

bers, annually chosen by ballot, have various other arbitrary powers, which they are not loth to exercise. A striking instance occurred in December last. A member having incurred their highnesses' displeasure, they did everything in their power to get him expelled; but finding in the end, on the advice of counsel, that the rules and regulations would not warrant in his case such an exercise of authority, they were obliged to content themselves with something like an expression of regret that they were not possessed of the power to expel the party.

The terms of admission to the Stock Exchange are at present 10*l.* 10*s.* The number of members is about 800.

In the quotation of the prices of the various descriptions of stock, certain regulations are observed. The prices of India stock, Bank stock, and South Sea stock or annuities, are not quoted where the amount purchased is under 500*l.*; nor is a quotation of prices made under the usual head on consols, reduced 4 per cents, 3½ per cents, or any other government perpetual annuities, where the sum contracted for

does not amount to 1,000*l*. If the sum amount to 500*l*. and be under 1,000*l*., the prices are to be quoted, but under a separate head. In the cases of omnium, scrip, and India bonds, the quotation is to be made when the amount purchased reaches 1,000*l*. The prices of exchequer bills are quoted when the sum contracted for is 500*l*.; or 100*l*. of small exchequer bills. The prices of long annuities, or any other terminable annuities, are quoted when the sum contracted for amounts to 25*l*. per annum. In the case of shares of any public companies, the rule by which the quotation of prices is regulated, is that such quotation shall be made when the purchaser has bought to a sufficient amount to entitle him to a vote at the company's public meetings. As regards foreign stock again, the prices are only to be quoted when the sums contracted for shall amount to 1,000*l*. stock or scrip, 1,000 fs. French rentes, 250 ducats Neapolitan rentes, 1,036*l*. Russian stock, or any other foreign security representing about 1,000*l*. stock.

It is a fact not generally known, that by

one of the regulations of the Stock Exchange, any person purchasing stock in the funds, or any of the public companies, has a right to demand of the seller as many transfers as there are even thousand pounds in the amount bought. Suppose, for instance, that any person were to purchase 10,000*l.* stock, then, instead of having the whole made over to him by one ticket of transfer, he has a right to demand, if he so pleases, ten separate transfers from the party or parties of whom he purchased.

The descriptions of English stock which are least generally understood are scrip and omnium. Scrip means the receipt for any instalment or instalments which may have been paid on any given amount which has been purchased, of any government loan. This receipt or scrip is marketable,—the party purchasing it, either at a premium or discount as the case chances to be, becoming of course bound to pay up the remainder of the sum, on pain of forfeiting the money he has given for it. Omnium means the various kinds of stock in which a loan is ab-

sorbed; or to make the thing still more intelligible, a person purchasing a certain quantity of omnium, purchases given proportions of the various descriptions of government securities.

Bargains made one day are always checked the following day, by the parties themselves or their clerks. This is done by calling over their respective books one against another. In most transactions, what is called an option is given, by mutual consent, to each party. This is often of great importance to the speculator, and should always be stipulated for where circumstances will permit. There are so many different kinds of options in the purchase or sale of stock for time, that it is difficult to make them intelligible to the general reader. What is termed the put and the call, or the put and call for the account day, or any other day, may be purchased for a sum of money, or so much per cent.; that is to say, you may, supposing the price to be 90, have the power to compel a sale or purchase of so much stock at 90% for one-eighth or one-fourth per cent., or for any other sum agreed on between

the parties. In selling 1,000*l.* consols, or any other sum for the account, you may, by submitting to a sacrifice of one-fourth or three-eighths, as the price of the option may have been fixed, acquire the power to compel the purchaser to take as much more, if you please; that is to say, provided it suits your interest in consequence of the fall of prices on the account day; or, in buying, you have in like manner the option, by giving something more for your stock, to call for double the quantity. You may buy at one price to put back at another, or sell at one price to call back at another, thereby fixing the amount of your risk.

By far the greater portion of business transacted in Capel Court is in what are called time bargains. By time bargains is meant, that no actual transfer of the stock ostensibly purchased for the account need take place, but the party purchasing engages to give, should the peculiar stock rise, the party selling any difference between the price at the time of the purchase and what it is on the day fixed for adjusting the

matter. The seller, on the other hand, comes under a similar engagement, to give the buyer any difference in price should there be a rise in the value of such stock.

There are eight account days in the year when time bargains between the members are adjusted. They are usually Thursday or Friday. The Saturday is never fixed on ; first, because that is not a transfer day at the Bank, and, secondly, because the day immediately following is always settling day, which could not be the case were Saturday the account day. In the foreign Stock Exchange, the settling day occurs twice in each month.

I have before mentioned, that when a member fails to fulfil his engagements his name is placarded on a black board as a "defaulter." This is looked on as a rather genteel name : the most common designation of such a person among the members is, that he is a "lame duck."

Every one who has read the city intelligence of any newspaper must have often encountered

the words “Bulls” and “Bears.” The “Bulls” are those who have to take more stock than they can pay for, and who therefore want to get rid of it; and the “Bears” are those who are engaged to deliver more stock than they can deliver at the price agreed for, with safety to themselves. The reader must also have observed it occasionally stated in the public journals, that great efforts were making in the money market to make the account a “Bull” account, or a “Bear” account, just as the case happens to be. That simply means, that the class of persons represented by either of the above animals were doing all in their power so to influence the market as to make the prices, on settling day, most favourable to themselves. With this view all sorts of rumours are set afloat. The number of fibs hatched and industriously circulated in Capel Court, on such occasions, exceeds all credibility. Had Baron Munchausen ever been on the Stock Exchange, he would have been ashamed of his own inventive powers. Ferdi-

nand Mentez Pinto was but a mere type of some persons in the money market, when they have a sufficient inducement to put their inventive capabilities to the test.

The members of the Stock Exchange consist of three distinct classes. The first class are called jobbers. The jobber is a person who is always found in his place from the opening to the closing of the Stock Exchange, except when he has to cross over to the Bank for transfers; and who is at all times ready to buy or sell stock, for what, in technical language, is called the turn of the market, the meaning of which I will give presently. The jobbers are subdivided into sections. There is the consol jobber, the four per cent. jobber, the long annuity jobber, and the jobber in exchequer bills, India stock, India bonds, &c. With the exception of the consol jobber, all the others, unless in peculiar circumstances, as, for example, when the particular stock is short, do business for ready money. The consol jobber also does

business for regular transfer, or in other words, for ready money; but by far the greater part of the business done in consols is for time, and the transaction is consequently called a time bargain. By this is meant a bargain for the price of consols, either at the ensuing account or settling day, or some other day agreed on.

The second class of members are called brokers. These are persons who are employed by parties out of doors to buy or sell a certain amount of stock for them, either in the shape of money or time bargains, as the case may be. The broker so empowered to act goes into the house, and advancing towards the jobber accosts him with "Well, what are they?" meaning, of course, the price of consols. The jobber replies, they are so-and-so, say 90—90 $\frac{1}{8}$, which means he will give 90% for 100% stock, or he will sell at 90-2-6 for 100% stock. The broker says, "I will take them," or "You shall have them," just as he is instructed to buy or sell. Should, however, the quantity of stock be large, the broker must name the amount.

Otherwise, the jobber, not liking perhaps either to sell or buy a large quantity at that particular time, would decline being “saddled” as it is termed, with so much, and would back out of the bargain with only 1000ℓ.,—there being a law in the house which protects any jobber or broker from either receiving or disposing of more than that quantity, in all cases where, at the time of making the bargain, the precise amount was not specified by the broker. The broker’s business would, without such specification, be thus exposed, and probably the result would be that before he could execute his commission, he would have to submit to a sacrifice of one-eighth or one-fourth per cent.* The broker, therefore,

* It is not unusual, when a large operation is ordered, for the broker to call one of the leading jobbers aside, and offer him a “turn” of one-fourth or three-eighths per cent., provided he will undertake the whole transaction. In this way the business is done quietly and at the jobber’s leisure, according as the market will bear it. If a broker were, by hovering about the market or otherwise, to suffer his object to transpire, the prices would be necessarily driven up or down, and thus he would suffer for his indiscretion.

takes care to name the amount he wishes either to sell or purchase.

The usual rate of remuneration which a broker receives for transacting business for a customer is one-eighth per cent., or half a crown for every 100*l.* of stock which he buys or sells. This, however, is not the commission invariably charged by brokers. In extensive transactions the broker seldom gets more than one-sixteenth per cent. or one-thirty-second on what is called "one side the account."

As soon as a broker has completed his business, whether for time or money, he is expected to hand to his constituent, or "principal," to use the phraseology of the Stock Exchange, a contract containing the price or prices, and name or names of the jobber or jobbers with whom the transaction has been done. By observing this regulation he exempts himself from all liability in case of the failure of the jobbers.

The third class of members of the Stock Exchange are the speculators. These are parties who buy or sell on their own account; and

who only “operates” when he conceives the market is in a condition for his doing so to advantage. Most of the transactions on the Stock Exchange may be said to be a species of gambling on a large scale; but the speculator is a gambler in a peculiarly emphatic sense. He who throws the dice is not more so, though there be a difference in the modes of gambling. And, perhaps, of the two modes, that of casting the dice is entitled to the preference. As regards the individual’s own feelings, it certainly is so: for the gambler in Crockford’s, the Berkeley, or the Cercle, either loses or gains at once, and is thus spared the agonies of suspense; while, in the case of the Stock Exchange gambler, he has to endure all the horrors of suspense—and what horror can be greater, where a man’s all perhaps is at stake?—for some weeks at a time. I have heard of speculators in Capel Court whose feelings have undergone such a constant and violent alternation of hope and fear, that they have not enjoyed one hour’s regular sleep for fourteen consecutive

nights, but have tossed themselves about on their beds as if they had been suffering under severe physical fever.

Defaulters in the case of time bargains cannot be proceeded against by law, the transactions being, as just remarked, illegal. Hence the peculiar stringency of the rules by which the admission and continuance of members are regulated. Notwithstanding, however, the rules and regulations of the Stock Exchange, desperate characters not unfrequently find their way into it. Many of the most extensive and inveterate speculators have not a farthing in their pocket. They are mere adventurers: they are desperate men and act on desperate principles. Their maxim is, "neck or nothing." If the transaction turns out favourable, good; if not, the parties dealing with them suffer. It is not many months since a defaulter who could not command five pounds in the world, was at one time a purchaser of stock to the amount of nearly 200,000*l*. A common trick among these speculators on the Stock Exchange is, to enter their

stock in fictitious names, as if avowedly purchased for themselves, it would necessarily create suspicion, and consequently put an end to their opportunities of speculating.

From the observations and statements which have already been made, it will at once be inferred that the Stock Exchange is by no means remarkable for its morality. A member failing and giving up his last farthing to his creditors, is not, by at least a large proportion of the other members, thought so favourably of as he who takes care to make a reserve for himself. While the latter steps at once into business again, and obtains credit on effecting an adjustment of his affairs, the former has to struggle hard before he can get begun anew. A member is sometimes blamed, and his credit often suffers, because he does not make a stand when an account goes against him and he is known to have a large sum to pay. An instance of this occurred some time ago. A person who used to go among the members by a name which I will not mention, and who had been supposed to act on

the market for a party connected with a large newspaper establishment,—lost on one account 10,000*l*. He paid the amount without a murmur; but lost his credit from that moment, and never afterwards recovered it; for it was thought the payment of so large a sum must have broken his back, he being, in Stock Exchange phraseology, but a “little man,” that is to say, of but moderate means.

But a still more striking and very interesting illustration of the estimation in which sterling integrity is held among a large proportion of the members, was afforded in the case of the late Mr. L. A. de la Chaumette, a gentleman of foreign extraction. He had previously been in the Manchester trade, but had been unfortunate. Being a man much respected, and extensively connected, his friends advised him to go on the Stock Exchange. He adopted their advice, and became a member. He at once established an excellent business as a broker. Not only did he make large sums in the shape of commissions, on the transactions in which he was

employed by others, but one of the largest mercantile houses in London having the highest possible opinion of his judgment and integrity, intrusted him with the sole disposal of an immense sum of money belonging to the French refugees, which was in their hands at the time. He contrived to employ this money so advantageously, both to his constituents and to himself, that he acquired a handsome fortune. Before he had been a member three years, he invited his creditors to dine with him on a particular day, at the London Tavern ; but concealed from them the particular object he had in view in so doing. On entering the room, they severally found their own names on the different plates, which were reversed, and on turning them up, each found a cheque for the amount due to him, with interest. The entire sum which Mr. L. A. de la Chaumette paid away on this occasion, and in this manner, was upwards of 30,000*l*. Next day he went into the house as usual ; and such was the feeling entertained of his conduct, that many members refused to do a bargain

with him to the extent of a single thousand. They looked on his payment of the claims of his former creditors as a foolish affair, and fancied that possibly he might have exhausted his resources, never dreaming that, even if he had, a man of such honourable feeling and upright principle was worthy of credit to any amount. He eventually died worth upwards of 500,000*l*.

Friendship is a thing almost wholly unknown on the Stock Exchange. The instant a man fails, no matter how fair and honest may have been all his transactions, he is deserted by those who professed the greatest attachment to him before. He is, with very few exceptions, cut by them in the streets as soon as his failure is known, though they may have fawned on him like so many spaniels so long as he was supposed to be a man in easy circumstances. In the few instances in which he may be treated with a little outward civility, it will almost invariably be found that it is when they suppose the hapless victim has not been fleeced of his all; but that something more may yet be got

by good management. In that case no effort is left untried to extract his last shilling from him. When a man has been unfortunate, and it is thought that something more may still be obtained, the creditors propose, to use the language of the house, "to draw his teeth." If he resist, his name is clapped on the black-board, of which I have spoken in a former part of the chapter.* There are doubtless some honourable exceptions, as before observed, to this mode of treating unfortunate members, but, as just stated, they are comparatively few indeed.

One would suppose that where so much important business is transacted, as at the Stock Exchange, and where the parties transacting it must be assumed, both from their education and standing in society, to be gentlemen, that all the proceedings in the place would be characterised by a becoming dignity of demeanour on the

* This is done in the hope that the relations of the party will come forward with a sum of money to assist him, which they sometimes do to avoid the disgrace which, through him, they conceive to be entailed on themselves.

part of the members. Never was there a supposition more opposite to the fact. A more uproarious scene was never witnessed than that which is continually exhibited on the Stock Exchange during the hours of business. Many of the members appear like so many grown-up school-boys engaged in every kind of pastime. You are furnished with some slight earnest of what you may expect when you get into "the house," as it is called, as soon as you enter Capel Court. There you see the members hallooing at each other, and occasionally seizing one another by the breast of the coat, or any other part of one's clothes which is most convenient at the time. Advance a little further; enter the lobby, if that be the right name of the place, and your ears will be regaled by all manner of sounds, and the forms of members will flit before your eyes in their exits and their entrances, with all the celerity, and sometimes exhibiting all the varied evolutions, of so many harlequins. There stands, on an eminence of a foot or so in height, and decked out in a sort of official livery, a poor fellow whose sole occupa-

tion it is to sing out, as he himself expresses it, through a sort of fixture speaking-pipe, the names of those “gentlemen of the Stock Exchange”—another favourite phrase of their own—whom strangers may wish to see. Perhaps a more laborious task than this servant of the house has to perform, has seldom fallen to the lot of mortals. Only imagine him bellowing out, at the full stretch of his voice, for six consecutive hours, and scarcely with a moment’s intermission, the names of the members whom “the public”—for that is the distinction in this case—may wish to converse with. To be sure, he does the thing as unceremoniously as possible, and with a good deal of the independence of manner usually ascribed to the Yankee character; for he never troubles himself by pronouncing the christian name of the party wanted. He deems it enough for him, and so it is in all conscience, to call the simple surname of the party. If, for example, Mr. John Arthur Robinson be the person to be called out, the door-keeper inserts his mouth

into the circular sheet-iron article made for its reception, and bawls out "Robinson,"—thus not only in the spirit of true republican equality dispensing with the honorary prefix of "Mr." but also with the christian "John" and "Arthur." The name of the party thus applied for is echoed by another servant, who is privileged to take his station in the inside. The noise is always so great as to render it impossible for the voice of the first person to be heard even the short distance of three or four yards in the inside; and were not he of the interior blessed with lungs of such extraordinary capabilities as to entitle him to the name of a second Stentor, even his voice would be drowned amidst the loud and everlasting noise, I had almost said Niagarian roar, of the place.

Some years ago, a wag took it into his head to exclaim in Drury Lane theatre, as loud as he could, "Mr. Smith, your house is on fire." The name was then, as now, so common, that it is said half the persons in the pit, all rejoicing in the patronimic, and each fancying himself to

be the particular individual apostrophised, rushed out of the theatre in breathless haste. A similar scene, though on a smaller scale, is often to be witnessed at the Stock Exchange. When a particular name is called, there is an immediate rush to the lobby-door, of persons who glory in that name, each of them supposing himself to be the person wanted. Various names are very general on the Stock Exchange.

I have already alluded to the deafening noise and uproar which prevail in the interior of the house, and of which the stranger has had some foretaste given him before he crosses its portals. I know of nothing which could give a better idea of the scene, than to compare it to that which is occasionally exhibited, though of course on a much smaller scale, by the boys of the newsmen, opposite the Courier Office. There you see the venders of the broad sheet all in motion on the pavement, and singing out in most discordant sounds, “A *Toimes*! Who wants a *Toimes*?” “A *'Eral* here! Who’s for a *'Eral*?”

“A *Cron*, a *Cron*, a *Cron*! Does any one want a *clean Cron*?” “A *Post* and *'Tiser*! Who'll have a *Post* or *'Tiser*?” In the Stock Exchange there is the same sort of bustle and noise, though on a much larger scale, and with this difference, that instead of your ears being dunned by the imperfectly pronounced names of the morning papers, they are assailed with the everlasting sounds of “*Consols*,” “*Reduced*”* (*Annuities*), “*Omnium*,” “*French*” (*Rentes*), “*Spanish*” (*Bonds*), “*Per cents.*,” of every description, “*Exchequer*,” (*Bills*) &c. &c. The first impression of a stranger on entering the Stock Exchange, were he not previously otherwise informed, would naturally be, that instead of being met to transact important business, they had assembled for the express purpose of having a little fun and frolic together. You not only hear them uttering, in addition to the sounds

* The members are very partial to an abbreviated mode of speaking, and, therefore, when speaking of *Reduced Annuities*, &c. they content themselves with the first word.

just alluded to, all other sorts of sounds, some of which partake a good deal of the zoological character, but you see a large proportion of them playing all manner of tricks at each other's expense. One of the most approved of these tricks, if we are to judge from the extent to which it is practised, is that of knocking one's hat down over one's eyes. This pastime, I believe they call "eclipsing," or "bonnetting." If the hat only goes down so far as not to prevent altogether the use of one's luminaries, it is, I presume, called a partial eclipse; but when the application of one's hand to the crown of the hat is given with such vigour as to force it down over the optics of the party who chances to be at the time the person played on, it is called a total eclipse. How far it can be so called with propriety, is at least a debatable point; for I have been assured by those who have undergone the somewhat unpleasant experiment of eclipsing, that if they saw nothing else, the severity and suddenness of "the whack," to use Stock Exchange phraseology, has made

them see stars innumerable. How many crowns of "best beavers" have been so completely "knocked in," as to render the hats ever afterwards unwearable, by means of the process of eclipsing, is, I suspect, a question which the most skilful calculator in the house would not undertake to decide. The cases from first to last of the destruction of hats in this way, must be innumerable; but the ingenuity of some of the members has discovered other means of assisting the hatters, where the eclipsing plan fails of effect. The members in question are remarkably expert at knocking the hats of other members off their heads altogether, and then kicking them about on the floor until they are shattered to pieces. So marked indeed are the hat-destroying propensities of some of the members, that a stranger would come away with the impression, that they were in the pay of the leading city hat manufacturers. Query—Are they so?

The dexterity which many of the members have acquired from long practice, at playing all

manner of tricks with the hats of each other, is really surprising, and would, were they inclined to accept it, procure them an engagement at any of the theatres. By wetting the fore-part of their fingers, and applying them to the hat of the party to be operated on, they, unconsciously to him, can make it let go its hold of his head; and then, before it has quitted his cranium entirely, they give it another "touch," as they call it, with the aforesaid fore-part of their fingers, which sends it spinning through the place a distance perhaps of forty or fifty feet.

There are various other pastimes which are daily practised on the Stock Exchange, besides those I have mentioned. Occasionally you will see walking-canes, umbrellas, &c. moving about through the place, to the imminent hazard of the heads of members. Chalking one another's backs is one of their most harmless expedients, when in a larking humour. The figures sometimes made on these occasions are of so odd a character, as to be equally beyond the .

pale of Euclid's mathematics, and the tailor-fics of any German knight of the thimble, or any other distinguished professor of the "fitting" art. It is scarcely necessary to say that when a person's back is thus well chalked he cuts a very odd figure. Not long ago, two of the gentlemen of the house mutually chalked each other's back with every conceivable variety of stroke, without the one knowing that the other had been playing any of his old tricks. The other gents, or at least that portion of them who most keenly relish a little frolic, had, of course, their laugh at the expense of both parties, while they individually richly enjoyed the affair, thinking they had achieved a wonderful exploit in having got through the chalking process without the party chalked being aware of the trick that had been played him. When others looked into their faces and laughed heartily, they each fancied it was in the way of giving them credit for their dexterity, and congratulated themselves accordingly. Little did either suppose the other gentlemen were

laughing *at*, instead of *with*, them. But perhaps the most amusing part of the affair, was that of the two chalked parties laughing most immoderately at each other, and winking at the other gentlemen around them, by way of self-gratulation at the ridiculous figure the one had been the means of making the other look. When the discovery was made of how they had tricked each other, both were mortified and crest-fallen in the greatest degree.

On particular days the more frolicsome gentlemen of the Stock Exchange have particular amusements. The 5th of November is a great day for fun amongst them. I am not aware that, like the boys in the streets, they dress up a Guy Fawkes for the occasion. If "Guy" has ever been paraded through the house, I have not heard of the circumstance; but crackers are quite in vogue among them on every anniversary of the escape from the gunpowder-plot. Last 5th of November, the number let off was incredible. Members went with their pockets literally crammed with them, and there was

nothing but an everlasting “rack, rack, rack,” from ten till four o’clock. They were flying in every direction; sometimes exploding about members’ feet, at other times about their ears and all parts of their bodies. The number of perforations made in the clothes of some of the more unfortunate members was so great, that certain parts of their garments had the appearance of targets. To such an extent was the joke carried as to render it impossible to do any business worthy of the name.

But to see the mischievous larking capabilities of certain gentlemen on the Stock Exchange to advantage, one must be there when a stranger chances to go in amongst the members. It is surprising how keen-scented they are in finding out the hapless intruder; and the moment the discovery is made, and the cry of “Fourteen Hundred”* is heard, they pounce upon him like so many ——, I shall not say

* “Fourteen hundred!” is the exclamation always made when a stranger is discovered. It is a sort of watch-word on the Stock Exchange.

what. He finds himself instantly surrounded, as if he were some criminal of the first magnitude and the parties around him officers of justice commissioned to take him into custody. He looks about him wondering what is the matter, or rather wondering what there can be about him which not only attracts all eyes, but all persons towards him. He has not time, however, to form a conjecture on the subject, when he finds himself eclipsed, not partially but totally. Before he has time to raise his hat, so as again to see the light of heaven which finds its way into the place, he feels some ten or a dozen hands, as if the paws of so many bears, pulling him about in every direction. Possibly he feels them tearing the clothes off his back; and from the rough usage he receives, he very naturally fears they will tear himself in pieces. Many a luckless wight has gone to the Stock Exchange with an excellent coat on his back, and come out with a jacket. To dock an intruder, is, by some of the members, deemed an illustrious exploit. There is one thing, however, to be said

in favour of the parties who chiefly distinguish themselves in this way in Capel Court, which is, that they never have recourse to Lynch law when dealing with the intruder. It is but right also to do them the justice of mentioning, that they never patronise the tarring and feathering process.

Many amusing anecdotes are related of the treatment which strangers have experienced, who have had the misfortune to enter the forbidden place. Not long ago, a friend of my own, ignorant of the rule so rigidly enforced for the expulsion of strangers, chanced to "drop in," as he himself phrased it, to the Stock Exchange. He walked about for nearly a minute without being discovered to be an intruder, indulging in surprise at finding that the greatest uproar and frolic prevailed in a place in which he expected there would be nothing but the strictest order and decorum. All at once a person who had just concluded a hasty but severe scrutiny of his features, sung out at the full stretch of his voice, "Fourteen Hun-

dred !” Then a bevy of the gentlemen of the house surrounded him. “Will you purchase any new navy five per cents,* sir?” said one, looking him eagerly in the face. “I am not ——” The stranger was about to say he was not going to purchase stock of any kind, but was prevented finishing his sentence by his hat being, through a powerful application of some one’s hand to its crown, not only forced down over his eyes, but over his mouth also. Before he had time to recover from the stupefaction into which the suddenness and violence of the “eclipse” threw him, he was seized by the shoulders and wheeled about as if he had been a revolving machine. He was then pushed about from one person to another, as if he had only been the effigy of some human being, instead of a human being himself. His hat was all this while down over his face, he having neither presence of mind nor time to restore it to its usual position on his head ; but even had

* It is hardly necessary to say that there is no such stock.

it been otherwise, all concern for the hat must have merged in deep anxiety for himself. After tossing and hustling him about in the roughest possible manner, denuding his coat of one of its tails, and tearing into fragments other parts of his wardrobe, they carried him to the door, where, after depositing him on his feet, they left him to recover his lost senses at his leisure. His first feeling on coming to himself again, was one of thankfulness that he had not realised the fate of the frog in the fable which was stoned to death by the boys on the banks of the pond, for no other reason in the world than that of a resolution to gratify their own propensities for pastime. He says he would as soon enter a lion's den, as again cross the threshold of the Stock Exchange.

The "gentlemen of the Stock Exchange," however, do not always maltreat persons with impunity. Sometimes when they least expect it, they catch a tartar. It is not very long since a middle-sized but very powerful man came up to town from Yorkshire. He was

well known in his own neighbourhood for being of such a proud spirit as never to brook an affront. One day he went into the Stock Exchange, in utter ignorance of his transgressing any law, conventional or otherwise. The members seemed to know by instinct that he was an intruder, just as Falstaff knew royalty by the same quality. He had not elbowed his way a few yards into the place, when a chorus of voices shouted out—"Fourteen Hundred!" In a moment, to his unspeakable surprise, the entire contents of the house seemed to him to have planted themselves by his side. Down went his hat before he had time to hazard a conjecture as to the cause of his attracting so many persons around him. In an instant after the descent over his face, of his upper covering, the process of wheeling and hustling his person about, commenced with vigour. The Yorkshire stranger uttered an oath or two, and invoking a nameless doom on himself if he had "coom" from the country to be treated in that way, disengaged his arms from the hold of his tormen-

tors, and distributed sundry heavy blows among them. Acting on the system of the Malays, who when injured in any way run a-muck at the first person they meet, the Yorkshireman did not trouble himself about who were the principal aggressors, but hit about him right and left, and with such marked effect, that in a few seconds he had made a ring for himself of considerable circumference. Still preserving his pugilistic attitude, he then walked slowly out of the place, no one venturing to indulge in any further pastime at his expense. I should mention, that while he was under the eclipse, he seized one of his assailants by his handkerchief, and kept so firm a hold of it that another member was obliged to cut it in two to prevent the unlucky wight from being strangled.

The amount of business sometimes transacted in one day at the Stock Exchange is very great. On some occasions, property, including time bargains, to the amount of 10,000,000*l.* has there changed hands in the short space of a few hours. The late Mr. Rothschild is known to

have made purchases in one day to the extent of 4,000,000*l*. The influence which that great capitalist exercised over the funds may be said to have been omnipotent. He could cause a rise or a fall, to a certain extent, whenever he pleased. He was a singularly skilful tactician. To those who know anything of the Stock Exchange it cannot be necessary to state, that he never went into it himself. That, indeed, would have defeated his objects. Had he transacted his business in the funds in his own person, everybody must have seen what he was doing, and consequently others, knowing his general good fortune, would have sold out when he sold out, and purchased when he purchased. One great cause of his success was the secrecy in which he contrived to shroud all his transactions. He had certain men whom he employed as brokers on ordinary occasions ; but whenever it suited his purpose, or when he supposed that by employing them, it would be ascertained that he wished to effect either a rise or a fall, he took care to commission a new set of brokers

to act for him. His mode of doing business, when engaging in large transactions, was this: Supposing he possessed exclusively, which he often did a day or two before it could be generally known, intelligence of some event which had occurred in any part of the continent sufficiently important to cause a rise in the French funds, and through them on the English funds, he would empower the brokers he usually employed to sell out stock, say to the amount of 500,000*l*. The news spread in a moment in Capel Court, that Rothschild was selling out, and a general alarm followed. Every one apprehended he had received intelligence from some foreign part of some important event which would produce a fall in prices. As might, under such circumstances, be expected, all became sellers at once. This of necessity caused the funds, to use Stock Exchange phraseology, "to tumble down at a fearful rate." Next day, when they had fallen, perhaps, one or two per cent., he would make purchases, say to the amount of 1,500,000*l*.; taking care, however, to employ a

number of brokers whom he was not in the habit of employing, and commissioning each to purchase to a certain extent, and giving all of them strict orders to preserve secrecy in the matter. Each of the persons so employed was, by this means, ignorant of the commission given to the others. Had it been known the purchases were made for him, there would have been as great and sudden a rise in the prices as there had been in the fall, so that he could not purchase to the intended extent on such advantageous terms. On the third day, perhaps, the intelligence which had been expected by the jobbers to be unfavourable, arrives, and instead of being so, turns out to be highly favourable. Prices instantaneously rise again; and possibly they may get one and a-half, or even two per cent. higher than they were when he sold out his 500,000%. He now sells out at the advanced price the entire 1,500,000% he had purchased at the reduced prices. The gains by such extensive transactions, when so skilfully managed, will be at once seen to be enormous. By the

supposed transaction, assuming the rise to be two per cent., the gain would be 35,000%. But this is not the greatest gain which the late leviathan of modern capitalists has made by such transactions. He has on more than one occasion made upwards of 100,000% on one account.

Repeated efforts, but always without effect, and generally to the ruin of the party making them, have been made to overthrow the power of Rothschild in the money market. It was clear that the only way in which this could be done, if it was to be done at all, would be by the party attempting it, engaging in transactions of corresponding magnitude. By far the boldest of these attempts was made some years ago by a young gentleman, a Mr. James H——. He made a number of most extensive purchases, and sold out again to a very large amount, all in a very short period of time; and so far from imitating the conduct of the rival whose empire on the Stock Exchange he sought to subvert, in the secrecy of his transactions, he deemed it essential to the success of his schemes, that his ope-

rations should be performed as openly as possible. Mr. H— was the son of a wealthy country banker, and held, at the time of his introduction, money stock in his own name, though it actually was his father's, to the extent of 50,000*l*. The reputation of being so rich invested him at once with great importance in the house. The 50,000*l*., after Mr. H— had been some time a member, was privately re-transferred to his father, the real owner of it. For some time, and until he became perfectly master of the rules and usages of the house, he acted with great prudence and caution, confining his transactions to small amounts; but he eventually began to astonish "the natives,"—for so the members are often called,—by the boldness of his manœuvres. In a very short time he became the dread of all parties: the Bulls and Bears were anxious to follow him; but, like Rothschild, he evinced a disposition to act independently of every person and every party. About this time consols were as high as 96 or 97. In a few months afterwards symptoms of a coming

panic began to manifest themselves; and a well-known writer on money matters, having, at the time, for reasons best known to himself, begun to deal out his fulminations against the Bank of England in an influential newspaper, the unhealthy state of the market was greatly aggravated, though high prices were still maintained. Mr. H—— watched the state of things with great attention; and being satisfied in his own mind that a leader was only wanting to commence and carry on a successful war against Rothschild, he determined himself to become that leader; and it must be admitted that he acquitted himself as an able general. Going into the house one afternoon, he accosted one of the most respectable jobbers thus :

“What are consols?”

“Ninety-six and eight,” was the answer.

“In 100,000l.?” continued he.

“Yes,” said the jobber.

“You have them. 100,000l. more?”

“I’ll take 100,000l. more.”

“They are your’s.”

“ Another 100,000*l.* ? ”

“ No ; I don't want any more. ”

On this transaction being finished, the adventurous young gentleman immediately turned round and announced aloud that “ 200,000*l.* had been done at 96, and more offered. ” Then walking backward and forwards “ like a tiger in a den, ” he followed up the bold tactics he had commenced, by offering any part of 1,000,000*l.* at 94. For a great part of this amount he at once found purchasers. But he was not yet content with the extent of his transactions, great as they were ; nor would he wait for buyers at 94. He offered them, viz. consols, at 93, at 92, and eventually as low as 90, at which price they left off that day. Next day he renewed his exertions to depress the market, and he succeeded to the utmost of his wishes ; for consols did not stop in their descent till they reached 74. As was to be expected, contemporaneous with this sudden and extraordinary fall in the price of consols, there was a run on the Bank of England which almost exhausted it of its specie. He

then purchased to so large an extent, that when a re-action took place, he found that his gains exceeded 100,000%.

It can scarcely be necessary to say that all eyes were fixed with amazement on the boldness of the young gentleman's operations. Many fancied they saw in those operations the dynasty of Rothschild tottering to its fall. With what feelings the "Jew" himself regarded the adventurous conduct of his new and unexpected rival, no one had an opportunity of knowing; for in nothing was Rothschild more remarkable than in the reserve he maintained on all matters relating to the money market. The rivalry of Mr. H—— was, however, of short duration: he very soon fell a victim to an enterprise which, both in conception and execution evinced much more of the quality of boldness than of judgment. In about two years after the above extensive "operation," he attempted another on a scale of corresponding magnitude; but in this case Rothschild, anticipating the tactics he would adopt, laid a trap for him into which he

fell and became a ruined man. He was declared a defaulter, and his name stuck up on the black board. It was only now that the discovery was made, that the 50,000*l.* money stock supposed to be his own, was in reality his father's, and that it had been re-transferred in his name. A deputation from the committee waited upon Mr. H— immediately after his failure, at his own house in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park, when one of the most rapacious of the number suggested a sale of his furniture, and a mortgage of an annuity settled on his wife. He received the suggestion with the utmost indignation, and ringing the bell for his servant, desired him to show the deputation down stairs, adding that he would be—I shall not say what—before he would pay a sixpence after the treatment he had met with from them. “As for you, you vagabond, ‘My son Jack,’* who have had the audacity to make such a proposal to me; as for you,

* The designation by which one of the members always went, his father having been accustomed to speak of him as his “son Jack.”

sir, if you don't make haste out of the room I'll pitch you out of the window." It is scarcely necessary to say that "My son Jack," was the first who reached the bottom of the stairs.

But though no person during the last twelve or fifteen years of Rothschild's life was ever able for any length of time to compete with him in the money market, he on several occasions was, in single transactions, outwitted by the superior tactics of others. I will give one instance. In that instance Rothschild had to contend not only with a man of more than ordinary ability, but one in the soundness of whose judgment all who were acquainted intimately with him reposed the most implicit reliance. Hence they, and especially his monied connexions, were ready to follow him in any operation. The gentleman to whom I allude was then and is now the head of one of the largest private banking establishments in town. Abraham Montefiore, Rothschild's brother-in-law, was the principal broker to the great capitalist, and in that capa-

city was commissioned by the latter to negotiate with Mr. —— a loan of 1,500,000*l*. The security offered by Rothschild was a proportionate amount of stock in consols, which were at that time 84. This stock was of course to be transferred to the name of the party advancing the money,—Rothschild's object being to raise the price of consols by carrying so large a quantity out of the market. The money was lent and the conditions of the loan were these—that the interest on the sum advanced should be at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and that if the price of consols should chance to go down to 74, Mr. —— should have the right of claiming the stock at 70. The Jew, no doubt, laughed at what he conceived his own commercial dexterity in the transaction; but ere long he had abundant reason to laugh on the wrong side of his mouth; for no sooner was the stock pawned in the hand of the banker, than the latter sold it, along with an immensely large sum which had been previously standing in his name, amounting altogether to little short of 3,000,000*l*.. But even this was not all: Mr.

—— also held powers of attorney from several of the leading Scotch and English banks, as well as from various private individuals who had large property in the funds, to sell stock on their account. On these powers of attorney he acted, and at the same time advised his friends to follow his example. They at once did so; and the consequence was that the aggregate amount of stock sold by himself and his friends conjointly, exceeded 10,000,000*l*. So unusual an extent of sales, all effected in the shortest possible time, necessarily drove down the prices. In an incredibly short time they fell to 74,—immediately on which Mr. —— claimed of Rothschild his stock at 70. The Jew could not refuse; it was in the bond. This climax being reached, the banker bought in again all the stock he had previously sold out, and advised his friends to re-purchase also. They did so, and the result was that in a few weeks consols reached 84 again, their original price, and from that to 86. Rothschild's losses were very great by this transaction; but they

were by no means equal to the banker's gains which could not have been less than 300,000*l* or 400,000*l*.

Since Rothschild's death no one can be said to have taken his place on the Stock Exchange. There are several gentlemen who engage in very large transactions; but they can scarcely be said to approximate in amount to his. Neither do they stand out, as capitalists, with any very great pre-eminence. Rothschild's sons are, of course, severally rich even compared with those who are regarded as among the most affluent; but, then, compared with him, they can only be considered poor, his wealth being divided amongst them. But independently of this, they have neither the spirit of enterprise nor the financial knowledge or skill of their late father.

It is to the transactions of speculators in the funds, such as those I have described in the case of Rothschild, and to others of a smaller amount by less affluent parties, and not to any purchases effected or sales made by the public, that the sudden rise or fall of consols is to be

ascribed. Were the funds left to the operation of the public alone, there would be scarcely any fluctuation in them at all.

The late Abraham Goldsmid, who unfortunately shot himself a good many years ago, used to carry on business to an immense extent on the Stock Exchange. Perhaps the amount of his transactions were never exceeded by that of any man excepting Rothschild himself. He always did his business on the most liberal and honourable terms, and was greatly respected by all who knew him; but his good qualities did not prevent his becoming the victim to a league, I will not call it a conspiracy, entered into by a party against him,—which party some persons have conjectured included some of his own relations, since dead. At the period alluded to, which is more than a quarter of a century since, a practice obtained as it did for some years afterwards, of allowing the King's money as it is called, to accumulate in the hands of the different collectors and receivers throughout the kingdom, till the end of the half year or quarter, when they had to ac-

count for it, sometimes in the funds but more frequently in what are called floating securities, viz. Exchequer Bills and India Bonds. Goldsmid had on one occasion taken, in conjunction with a well-known banking establishment, a large government loan. The party who had combined against poor Goldsmid contrived to produce from these collectors and receivers of the revenue and others so large an amount of these floating securities, that the omnium fell to 18 discount. The results as far as regarded Goldsmid, were in the first instance his failure, and eventually his death by his own hand. The banking house was affected to such an extent by its share of the loss, as to occasion for a time doubts of its solvency. The party referred to took care to purchase largely of omnium when at its greatest discount. On the following day it went up to 3 premium, which was the greatest fluctuation ever known in so short a time. The party were supposed to have cleared among them at least 2,000,000*l.* by the transaction.

Fortunes are lost or gained on the Stock

Exchange with a rapidity unknown in any other place. It is no uncommon thing—it was still less uncommon in the time of the war—for a man to be worth 20,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* one day, and to be a beggar the next. There are also many instances in the annals of the Stock Exchange of parties who could not command a farthing one day, being worth 20,000*l.* 30,000*l.*, 40,000*l.*, or 50,000*l.* the next. As illustrative of the sudden and singular vicissitudes of fortune which men sometimes undergo in that place, I may mention a curious instance in the case of Mr. F——, the present proprietor of one of the most extensive estates in the county of Middlesex. He had been for some years a member of the Stock Exchange, when, on becoming unfortunate, he had to suffer the indignity of having his name chalked on the black board; an indignity to which poverty more frequently than dishonourable conduct is subjected. The loss of a handsome fortune, coupled with the treatment he had received from the committee, worked his feelings up to such a state of

frenzy, that chancing to pass London bridge a few days after the battle of Waterloo, he, in his despair, threw the last shilling he had in the world over the bridge into the water. For a few moments afterwards he stood motionless on the spot, leaning over the parapet, and gazing vacantly on the water. The emotions which then passed through his mind were of a nature which no second party could describe; and which, indeed, even he himself could not by possibility convey with anything like their vividness or power, to the minds of others. His predominating feelings—but no idea can be formed of their burning intensity—were those of envy of the insensate stones, and of a wish that he himself were, like his last shilling, at the bottom of the river. That moment, but for the crowds of persons who were passing and repassing, he would have thrown himself over the parapet of the bridge, and ended his woes by ending his existence. From that instant, he did form the purpose of committing suicide; and he began to move slowly towards

home with that view. Before he had reached the other end of the bridge, he was met by a Frenchman with whom he had been on terms of great intimacy. He would have passed by the Frenchman, so absorbed was he with the wretchedness of his condition, without recognising him. The latter, however, advancing towards Mr. F——, seized him by the hand and inquired how he was. He managed to lisp out an “O, how are you?”

“This is a most important affair to both countries,” said the Frenchman.

“What affair?” inquired the other, partially recovering himself from the frightful reverie to which he had been giving way.

“Why, the great battle,” observed Monsieur.

“The great battle! What great battle?”

“The battle of Waterloo.”

“You are surely dreaming. I have not heard a word about it: the newspapers make no mention of any battle having been lately fought.”

“I dare say they do not. How could they?”

Intelligence of it has only reached town within the last two hours. The foreign secretary and the French ambassador alone know anything of it. Government have received the tidings of it by telegraph: it is not an hour since I parted with the French ambassador from whom I had the information. Napoleon is signally defeated."

Mr. F—— felt as if he had started from a deep sleep. He felt as if he had become a new man. The advantage to which such important intelligence might be turned on the Stock Exchange, the scene of so many disasters and so much degradation to him, immediately shot across his mind.

"And the battle was an important one?"

"*Most* important," said the Frenchman, with great emphasis. "It will prove fatal for ever to the prospects of Bonaparte. His usurpation is at an end," he added, with evident joy, being a great adherent of the Bourbon family."

"Were the numbers on either side great?"

"I have no idea of the exact numbers, but

the battle was the greatest which has been fought in modern times, and it lasted a considerable part of three days."

Mr. F—— cordially shook the Frenchman by the hand, and said he would call on him in a day or two. Hastily returning to the city, he hurried to a certain firm on the Stock Exchange, informed them that he had just become exclusively possessed of most important information, and expressed his readiness to communicate it to them on condition that he should receive the half of whatever profits they might realise on any operation they might have in the Stock Exchange in consequence of that information. They agreed to his proposal: he told them the result of the battle of Waterloo; they rushed into the market and purchased consols to an enormous amount. In the meantime Mr. F—— proceeded to another large house and told them also that he possessed information of the most important character, of which he was sure they had heard nothing. They admitted they knew of nothing that was not in the public

prints. He made the same proposal to them he had done to the other firm: they also, not supposing Mr. F— had spoken to any other party on the subject, at once closed with the offer, and on the intelligence being communicated to them, one of the partners called the other aside—there were only two in the counting-house at the time—and whispered to him, not on any account to let Mr. F— out of his sight, lest he should allow the important intelligence to transpire to some one else,—adding that he would that instant hurry to the Stock Exchange and employ various brokers to purchase consols to a large amount. “You’ll recollect what I have said,” he observed to his partner, as he hastened out of the counting-house. “I’ll take special care of that,” said the other. “Leave such matters to me,” he added in his own mind. A thought struck him. “Mr. F—, will you just step into the parlour,” pointing the way, “and have a lunch?” Mr. F— assented. They both proceeded to an apartment in another part of the house. A lunch was brought. Mr. F—, whose

state of mind had deprived him of all appetite for some days past, now ate rather heartily. While busy with the things set before him, the other, rising from his seat, said, "You'll excuse me for a moment, Mr. F—, while I transact a small matter in the counting-house." "Certainly," said Mr. F—, "take your time." The other quitted the room, and on getting to the outside, locked the door, unknown to Mr. F—, and put the key in his pocket. In about half an hour the first partner returned from the Stock Exchange and stated, that the funds had already, from some cause or other, risen in an hour or two three per cent. The cause, it is unnecessary to say, was the immense amount of consols which had been purchased by the first house to whom Mr. F— gave the information. Both partners proceeded to the apartment in which they had shut up their prisoner, and apprised him of the rise which had taken place, adding that they did not think it advisable to purchase at the advanced price. He urged them to do so, expressing his firm belief that when the news of so im-

portant a victory by the Allied Powers had been received, the funds would rise at least 10 or 12 per cent. The parties acted on his advice, and made immense purchases. The event justified the soundness of Mr. F—'s counsel, and the accuracy of his opinion ; for on the day on which intelligence of the battle was made general, the funds rose to the amazing extent of 15 per cent.,—which is the greatest rise they were ever known to experience. Mr. F—'s share of the profits between the two houses in one day exceeded 100,000*l*. He returned next day to the Stock Exchange, and very soon amassed a large fortune, when he had the wisdom to quit the place for ever, and went and purchased the estate I have alluded to, which he still possesses.

The funds experienced a greater fluctuation as well as greater rise on the day on which the result of the battle of Waterloo was made known than they ever did at any previous or subsequent period. The average rise in the course of the day, as just stated, was fifteen per cent.; but taking all their different variations, up and

down, and down and up together, the fluctuation was fully 100 per cent.

It can scarcely be necessary to say, that during the time of the war the fluctuations of the funds were much greater than they have been since the peace. The news of every succeeding battle sent them up, or drove them down, according as the result of such battle was supposed likely to affect this country. As might have been expected, all sorts of rumours as to new battles were got up to serve the purposes of individuals. Many a battle was fought and many a victory gained and lost on the Stock Exchange, which were never heard of anywhere else. So accustomed, indeed, had the members become to false intelligence in one or two of the leading papers, given with all the solemnity and positiveness of truth, that they frequently found themselves in the predicament of the persons who had been so often groundlessly alarmed by the cry of 'Wolf' from the shepherd's boy, that they did not believe it when true. On one occasion a blunt honest member, who had an

immense stake depending on the aspect of the war on the continent, having heard a rumour that a certain battle had taken place, but not knowing whether to credit it or not, determined on waiting personally on Lord Castlereagh, then foreign minister, with the view of endeavouring to get at the truth. He sent up his name to his lordship, with a note stating the liberty he had taken in consequence of the amount he had at stake, and begging as a favour to be informed whether the news of the battle in question was true. The noble lord desired the gentleman to be sent up stairs. He was shown into his lordship's room. "Well, sir," said his lordship, "I am happy to inform you that it is perfectly true this great battle has been fought, and that the British troops have been again victorious."

"I am exceedingly obliged to your lordship for your kindness in giving me the information: I am a ruined man," said the Stock Exchange speculator, making a low bow and withdrawing. He had calculated on the triumph, at the next conflict, of Napoleon's army. He had speculated

accordingly; a contrary issue at once rendered him a beggar.

The members of the Stock Exchange are for the most part exceedingly ignorant of all other matters except those which immediately bear on their own business. This may be accounted for, partly from the fact of many of them being of an humble origin, and but very imperfectly educated; and partly from the fact, that when they have once entered the place, their minds, as in the case of the gamblers at the west end, become so engrossed with the everlasting subject of "stock," that they not only never talk but scarcely ever think of anything else. As for *doing*, again, the only actions a great many of them are ever known to perform are those of smoking tobacco and playing at billiards at night. There are some most inveterate smokers among them: the cigar is scarcely ever out of their mouths. It is an article which must cost many of them a very handsome something in the course of a year.

I have said that there are some excellent men

on the Stock Exchange who would be incapable of anything oppressive or vindictive towards a fallen member. I could mention the names of persons in the house who are an honour to their species. The late Mr. Goldsmid had many admirable moral qualities about him. For many years he had been accustomed to dine in a plain and simple way, at the London Tavern, or City of London Tavern—I am not certain which—when he was usually served by the same waiter. The waiter had always been remarkable for his civility and attention. One day Mr. Goldsmid observed that he was very inattentive and seemingly absent-minded. “What’s the matter with you to day, John?” inquired Mr. Goldsmid, just as he was about to quit the house.

“Nothing, sir; that is to say, sir, nothing very particular,” observed John, in faltering accents.

Mr. Goldsmid was strengthened in his conviction by the waiter’s confused manner of speaking, that something particular *was* the matter.

“Come, come, John, do tell me what makes you so absent-minded and unhappy like?” said Mr. Goldsmid.

“Well, Mr. Goldsmid, since you are so pressing in your kind inquiries, I am sorry to say that about half an hour ago I was arrested for debt, and must go to prison this evening if I cannot pay the money.”

“Arrested for debt, John! What induces you to get into debt?”

“Why, sir, to tell the truth, I am not able to support my wife and five children with what I can make in this house,” said the waiter, in very touching tones.

“And what may be the amount for which you are arrested?”

“I am ashamed to mention it, sir.”

“Let me hear it,” said Mr. Goldsmid.

“Why, sir, it’s for 55 $\frac{1}{2}$,” stammered out the waiter, in broken accents, looking stedfastly on the floor as if ashamed to hold up his head.

“Bring me a pen and ink,” said Mr. Goldsmid. A pen and ink was immediately brought,

when Mr. Goldsmid drew from his pocket his check-book, and having written a check for 100*l.*, put it into the poor fellow's hands, saying, "Here, go with that, John, to my banker's, and you will get as much for it as will pay your debt, and be a few pounds to your family beside."

I may mention another short anecdote illustrative of the excellence of Mr. Goldsmid's heart. It must make every one regret the unhappy end to which he came. Being on one occasion travelling in Somersetshire, his carriage was violently upset, owing to the horses taking fright, and he himself seriously hurt by the accident. He was taken to the house of a poor curate, at no great distance from the place at which the disaster occurred. There he was confined to his bed, from the injuries he had received, for a fortnight, during which time the curate was most marked and unremitting in his attentions. On recovering so far as to be able to undertake a journey to London, he asked the curate how much he was indebted to him for

the very great kindnesses he had received at his hand. The curate begged him not to mention such a thing: the idea of remuneration in such a case never entered his mind. Mr. Goldsmid, thinking after this that to press money on the good Samaritan's acceptance, would only hurt his feelings—happy were it for the church were all her clergy like him—quitted his humble and hospitable abode, assuring him that his humanity would not be forgotten. In six weeks afterwards the poor curate received a letter from Mr. Goldsmid, telling him that he had become the contractor for a large government loan, and that he had put down his (the curate's) name for 20,000*l.* omnium, which he hoped would turn out for his advantage. The simple-minded curate, who knew nothing more of the funds or of omnium, than he did of the Stock Exchange of the Georgium Sidus, if there be such a place in that planet,—fancied that as his name had been put down for a 20,000*l.* slice of the loan, it would be indispensable that that amount of money should be forthcoming. He

immediately wrote back to Mr. Goldsmid, thanking him for the kindness of his intentions, but adding, that instead of being able to raise 20,000*l.* he could not command 20*l.* in the world. Mr. Goldsmid answered the virtuous curate's letter by the post of next day, saying, that the 20,000*l.* could be dispensed with, and enclosing him 1,500*l.* as the amount of profit which he had received for the 20,000*l.* omnium, on selling it out,—the premium having risen since he had put down the curate's name, to an extent which cleared that sum.

Most of the leading men in the Stock Exchange go by nick-names. The way in which these names sometimes originate is curious. "My son Jack," a member already referred to, is a cognomen which dates its origin from the circumstance of the party's father having always called him by that name. Another member is dubbed "The Lady's Broker," in consequence of having been employed, on one occasion, by Mrs. R., the lady of a deceased capitalist, in a speculation into which she entered on her own

account, and without the knowledge of her husband. The speculation turned out so unfavourably that neither the lady nor her broker could discharge their obligations; and hence, as in other cases where the broker cannot meet the engagements he has entered into for any other party, he must, to save himself from the black board, give up the name of his principal,—the broker was compelled to divulge the name of the lady speculator. From that day to this he has gone under the name of “The Lady’s Broker.” The husband, knowing he could not be compelled to pay for the illegal gambling of his wife, refused to advance a farthing in liquidation of her debts. Every one, however, is not so frightened at the idea of having his name clapped on the black board as was the member in question.

It is worthy of observation, that with the single exception of the late Mr. David Ricardo, the celebrated political economist, there are no names, so far as I am aware, of any literary distinction connected with the Stock Exchange.

I know several members who have written pamphlets; but they have been on matters connected with their own business. Whether this absence of literary reputation on the Stock Exchange is to be ascribed to the engrossing nature of the transactions in which the members are engaged, is a point which I cannot undertake positively to determine, though I incline to the opinion that it is so in a great measure, if not wholly. As I have mentioned the name of Mr. Ricardo, I may observe that he amassed his immense fortune by a scrupulous attention to what he called his own three golden rules, the observance of which he used to press on his private friends. These were, "Never refuse an option* when you can get it,"—"Cut short your losses,"—"Let your profits run on." By cutting short one's losses, Mr. Ricardo meant that when a member had made a purchase of stock, and prices were falling, he ought to resell immediately. And by letting one's profits run on he meant, that when a member possessed stock, and prices

* This technicality has been already explained.

were rising, he ought not to sell until prices had reached their highest, and were beginning again to fall. These are, indeed, golden rules, and may be applied with advantage to innumerable other transactions than those connected with the Stock Exchange.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

Historical sketch and description of—Number of persons who visit it in a day—Business done in it—Supposed wealth of persons attending it—The late Mr. Rothschild—General observations—Negotiation of bills of exchange—The subject of exchanges explained.

THE Royal Exchange is a phrase with which everybody is familiar. It is one which is hardly ever out of the mouths of some of the city merchants. By many in the country it is confounded with the Stock Exchange. It will be afterwards seen that the two are wholly distinct from each other. The Royal Exchange is close to the Bank of England, and also to the Stock Ex-

change. You have only to walk a few yards in going from either of the three places to the other. It may be worth mentioning for the information of those unacquainted with the localities of the metropolis, that the Mansion House is also in the immediate neighbourhood. These four places are so near each other, that one might visit all of them in less than two minutes.

I shall afterwards have occasion to speak to of the present Royal Exchange, viewed merely as an architectural edifice. The first Royal Exchange, or Bourse, as it was then called, owed its origin to the munificence of Sir Thomas Gresham. The idea, however, was not his own; it was suggested to him, if our antiquarians may be credited, by Richard Clough, who had been Sir Thomas's leading clerk, and who was eventually knighted and made his representative at Antwerp,—the latter city being then the great commercial emporium of Europe. Sir Thomas first gave public intimation of his intention to build the "Bourse" in 1564. He laid the foundation-stone on the 11th of June, 1566,

and the building was finished in 1577. In three years afterwards, it was visited in state by Queen Elizabeth, who caused the "Burse" to be proclaimed by herald and trumpet, "The Royal Exchange." The edifice was erected at the sole expense of Sir Thomas, but the city of London purchased and presented him with the ground, and cleared away the buildings which stood on it, at an expense of 4,000*l*. The object which the founder of the institution proposed to himself, was to have an Exchange, with large and covered walks, wherein the merchants and traders of the city of London might daily assemble and transact business, in all seasons, without interruption from the weather, or impediments of any kind. Previous to the erection of the Royal Exchange the merchants were in the habit of meeting in the open air in Lombard Street, where they suffered many inconveniences, not only from the variableness of the weather, but from the intrusion of pedestrians along the thoroughfares, and of vehicles of every kind. Sir Thomas Gresham died in 1579, leaving the

building, with the shops, cellars, vaults, &c., belonging to it, to the corporation of London and the company of mercers, but providing that four professors, of divinity, astronomy, music, and geometry, should be appointed, at a yearly salary of 100*l.* each, to deliver gratuitous lectures in one of the rooms of the place. These professorships were kept up till 1830, when they were transferred to the London Institution; no one scarcely ever attending the lectures. It is said that the largest audience which ever honoured either of the professors with their presence during the delivery of their lectures, for many years previous to the time they were given up, consisted of three individuals.

What the peculiar style of architecture, or the extent of the first building may have been, I have not been able to learn. It was destroyed by the great fire in 1666. That the edifice must have been handsome, may be inferred from a casual remark made by the Rev. Thomas Vincent, a well-known evangelical divine of that period, in a work which he published imme-

diately after that destructive conflagration. "No stately building," says Mr. Vincent, "was so great as to resist the fury of the flames. The Royal Exchange itself, the glory of merchants, is now invaded with much violence. When the fire was entered, how quickly did it run round the galleries, filling them with flames; then descending the stairs, compasseth the walks, giving forth flaming volleys, and filling the courts with sheets of fire. By and by the kings fell all down upon their faces*, and, the greatest part of the building after them (the founder's statue only remaining) with such a noise as was dreadful and astonishing."

Mr. Bayley, in his "Reminiscences of London," gives another very interesting quotation from "Meditations on the Burning of London," by the Rev. Samuel Rolle, also a clergyman of that period,—which clearly shows that the Royal Exchange must have been an edifice

* By this is evidently meant, the statues of the Kings of England, which ornamented the building.

of great magnificence, as well as a place of great resort. "What a princely foundation," says he, "was the Royal Exchange! and of how great use! Was not that the centre in which those lines met, which were drawn from all parts of Europe? Rich merchants, I mean, and other eminent tradesmen and great dealers, not only English, but Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes, and Swedes. Was not the place a little epitome, or rather representative, of all Europe (if not of the greatest part of the trading world) renewed every day, at such a time, and for so many hours? As London was the glory of England, so was the Royal Exchange one of the greatest glories and ornaments of London. There were the statues of the Kings and Queens of England set up in the most conspicuous and honourable places, as well receiving lustre from the place where they stood, as giving lustre to it."

The rev. author proceeds in a quaint but forcible manner, to indulge in reflections on the subject:—"How full of riches was that Royal Exchange! Rich men in the midst of it, rich

goods above and beneath ! There were men walked upon the top of a wealthy mine ; considering what eastern treasures, costly spices, and such things were laid up in the bowels (I mean the cellars) of that place. As for the upper part, was it not the great storehouse whence the nobility and gentry of England were furnished with most of those costly things wherewith they did adorn themselves ? Here, if anywhere, might a man have seen the glory of the world in a moment. What artificial thing could entertain the senses and fantasies of men that was not there to be had ? Such was the delight that many gallants took in the magazine of all curious varieties, that they could almost have dwelt there ; going from shop to shop, like bees from flower to flower,—if they had had but a fountain of money, that could not have been drawn dry ! I doubt not but a Mahometan, who never expects more than sensual delights, would gladly have accepted of that place and the treasures of it, for his heaven, and have thought there were none like it. The sins of the lower part, where

merchants met to discourse their affairs, we may suspect to have been craft and covetousness, over-reaching and going beyond one another. And were there not other kinds of sins which did abound in the upper region of that Exchange, which like so many comets or blazing stars did portend or threaten the destruction of it? Oh! the pride and prodigality that were there to be seen! How few could be charitable that were so expensive as many were in that place! And how much of that that was there expended, might well have been put to charitable uses! How likely was it that they should be humble who were so curious and phantastical as the things that were bought showed them to be! They that worked for that place had need of as good a phantasie for metamorphosis in habits as Ovid had in other things, that they might please customers so unsatiabable after novelties.

“Though there was in that place an insurance office, which undertook for those ships and goods that were hazarded at sea, either by boisterous winds or dangerous enemies, yet it could not

secure itself, when sin, like Sampson, took hold of the pillars of it, and went about to melt it down. What quick work can sin and fire make ! How that strong building vanished of a sudden, as if had been but an apparition ! How quickly was it taken down, as if it had been but a slight tent, the cords whereof are presently loosened, and the stakes soon removed ! So fell that noble structure, undermined by craft and covetousness, and overladen with pride and prodigality ; and great was the fall thereof.”

It will at once be seen, amid the quaint expressions and moral reflections with which this extract abounds, what a magnificent superstructure the first Royal Exchange must have been, and what an important place it must have been in the estimation of the inhabitants of London. It would appear that the large apartments above must have been something like our modern bazaars, though containing a far more valuable assortment of articles. It will afterwards be seen that there is nothing of this kind connected with the present Royal Exchange.

I have not been able to ascertain what were the expenses which Sir Thomas Gresham incurred in building the original Royal Exchange. The style and dimensions of the place show that the expenses must have been enormous. Sir Thomas was, perhaps, one of the very few citizens of London at that period whose fortune could justify such an undertaking. His father was called, from his great wealth, and the extent of his commercial transactions, the King's Merchant.

The Royal Exchange was rebuilt without loss of time. On the 23rd of October, Charles the Second laid the base of the column on the west side, as you enter from Threadneedle Street. In eight days afterwards, the foundation stone of the column on the east side of the same entrance was laid by the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second; and on the 19th of the following month, the first stone of the eastern column of the entrance from the south was laid by Prince Rupert. The new building was finished in rather less than two years; and was

opened on the 28th September 1696. The entire expenses of the edifice amounted to 58,962*l.*, which would be equal to 200,000*l.* of our present money. The expenses were defrayed by the city and mercer's company conjointly, each paying one half. Considerable alterations and repairs were made in 1767, towards the expenses of which parliament contributed 10,000*l.* Additional alterations and repairs were made between 1820 and 1826, at an expense of upwards of 30,000*l.*

The Royal Exchange is chiefly built of stone. The form of the building is quadrangular. On either side in the interior is a commodious piazza; and in the central parts of the south and north sides is a piazza on the outside. The whole edifice unites the quality of stability with an excellent architectural taste. The interior is ornamented with statues of many of the sovereigns of England, independently of various other emblematical designs. The principal front of the building measures two hundred and sixteen feet, and the area within, exclusive of

the space occupied by the piazzas, is one hundred and forty-four feet from east to west, by one hundred and seventeen from north to south. This area is open above. It is paved with Turkey stones of a small size, which are said to have been the gift of a merchant who traded to that country. In the centre is a statue of Sir John Bernard, who was for many years the representative in parliament of the city of London. The walls of the piazzas are covered all over, chiefly with written placards advertising the sales of ships, goods, &c. the sailing of vessels, and containing announcements of every other kind connected with commercial and mercantile matters. I do not know the precise charge made for permission to post up these advertisements, but it is very trifling. Some merchants and others purchase the right for the whole year round, and no sooner take one down than they put another up. The shops outside the Exchange are very small in size, and are chiefly occupied by booksellers, stationers, and newsvenders. There are cellars underneath which are let out

for warehouses. On the upper floor, on the north side of the building, is Lloyd's coffee-house, so well known to all connected with the shipping business. This place consists of two lofty rooms, of considerable length, where all business is transacted between brokers and underwriters relative to the insurance of ships at sea. By an arrangement of the society who conduct this establishment, agents are established in all the leading sea-ports throughout the kingdom; and they make a point of furnishing the earliest possible information at headquarters relative to the arrival and sailing of vessels, and to their condition and equipment. Hence it is that Lloyd's is so celebrated for having the first intelligence in the metropolis respecting shipwrecks and other disasters by sea. On the same floor as Lloyd's there are several other rooms for other purposes, but it is unnecessary to advert to them in other than general terms.

The Royal Exchange, as might be expected, is a great object of curiosity to strangers. Most

persons on a visit to the metropolis make a point of seeing it. It is well worth seeing.

Various conjectures have been made as to the number of persons who visit it in the course of a day. There can be nothing but guesses on the subject. It is impossible to say with confidence what the exact number is. Some of the conjectures which have been hazarded are amusing for their extravagance. In the new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," now publishing in parts, a writer estimates the number at 200,000. This is perfectly astounding. Even supposing all who pass the Royal Exchange every day were to go into it, the number would not be much more than the half of what has been just stated; for it has been ascertained, as I mentioned in the first series of this work, that the entire number of persons who cross London Bridge in a day is under 100,000, and I am sure that every one who knows the two places will concur with me when I say, that the number of persons who go along Cornhill, in other words pass the Royal Exchange, in the

course of a day, is not much greater, if indeed it be so great, than that which crosses London Bridge every day. I should, for my own part, certainly say, that the number of persons who daily visit the Royal Exchange is under 20,000. In the early part of the day the place is quite deserted: you see nothing but an idler here and there, or some stranger gratifying his curiosity by the inspection of a place of which he has heard so much. I have often seen it when there were not fifty individuals present, including the parties who usually hang about it. Formerly the practice was to do business at all hours of the day; but our merchants have for some years past acted on the aristocratic principle of lying in bed in the morning, and postponing the transaction of business till a late hour. It is hardly thought respectable to appear on 'Change before four o'clock. Many of the city merchants would look on themselves as having committed a very serious offence against their commercial dignity, were they to be seen there before the hour I have named. The proper

time for beginning business, that is to say, in the estimation of the city aristocrats, is about four; and the time for finishing business is a little before five. The time allowed for the transaction of business is consequently very short. We hear much of the excellent business habits of Englishmen, and of the singular expedition with which they get through their transactions. Here is an instance of dispatch; the dispatch, however, is a matter of necessity, not choice. Those who do not finish their business by five o'clock must leave it unfinished. They are not allowed to remain after that hour on 'Change. The doors of the place are then shut; and if persons will not go out of their own accord, they will either be turned out or shut in. The officers of 'Change are fully empowered, by one of the regulations, to eject, by the everlasting ringing of a bell in their ears, those who do not choose to go of their own accord at the proper time. At half-past four o'clock one of the officers of the place goes round with a hand-bell, which he peals in the ears of all

those whom he sees in earnest conversation together. This is intended as a broad hint that the time for clearing 'Change is at hand, and that they had better have but few words together, and do as much business as possible in the limited time that remains for them. I need not say that it is no very pleasant thing for those who are engaged in earnest conversation on interesting topics with one another, to have their voices drowned as well as their tympanums invaded, by the deafening noise caused by the bell. These are considerations, however, which never enter the bellman's mind. He has no squeamishness on the subject. He does, as he himself says, his duty, which is to be as prodigal of the peals of his bell as possible. I have sometimes, indeed, thought that the noisy fellow takes a sardonic delight in interrupting those who are most earnest in conversation together. At all events, he displays no ordinary sagacity in singling out their ears for the heartiest salutes which the "long tongue" of his noisy instrument can give. My only surprise is, that

some city aristocrats do not, in a paroxysm of wrath, caused by his unceremonious interruptions, take his bell and smash it in pieces. To be sure they would repent it afterwards, and therefore it is better they should not do it. I may add, they would have no right to do such a thing; but when people act under the influence of a momentary excitement, they sometimes do what is wrong.

'Change about half-past four o'clock is an interesting sight. There you behold merchants of every kind and from all parts of Europe and the civilised world. If you do not always see natives of every part of the world, you see the representatives of the first commercial houses in every civilised country under heaven. The place, which is large, is as full as it can hold. In one place you see three or four all earnestly talking together; in another you see only two; but the conversation which is being carried on between those two may be of the most important kind. It may not only be about transactions of a very extensive nature; but it may be a con-

versation on the result of which the stability of some great commercial establishment hangs. You can see by the earnestness and seriousness of the parties' manner, that the matter of their conversation is of no ordinary importance. In other instances, you see twos and threes standing and conversing together in different places ; but you can at once discern, from the levity of their manner, that their business, if indeed they be engaged in business matters at all, is of no very interesting kind. Most probably they are there only from curiosity, as a great many always are ; for men accustomed to do business on 'Change are drawn to it at the usual time from a sort of habit, even when they have nothing to do. It is worthy of observation, that during the business hour—for it cannot be called hours—of the Royal Exchange, you very seldom see persons standing by themselves. You almost invariably see every body engaged with some or other of the thousands present. The topics, though almost exclusively of a commercial nature, are of necessity extremely varied. There is not a

branch of commerce under heaven which has not its representative there; there is scarcely a commodity in the world which is not the daily topic of conversation on the Royal Exchange. It is reported of some wit—I forget his name—of Charles the Second's time, that he took notes of the common conversation of a company of philosophers, and that on looking them over when the party broke up, they appeared a strange jumble of nonsense. Conversation relating to commercial transactions of such great importance, and of such vast magnitude as those which take place on 'Change, cannot with strict propriety be said to be nonsense, however much it might look like it; but were it possible to transfer to paper all the conversations which are being carried on at the same time during the busy moments there, they would certainly have the appearance of the most unintelligible jargon which ever escaped human lips. I have sometimes thought, that if a man could himself possess all the commercial information which is possessed by the persons on 'Change

taken altogether, what a living encyclopædia of commercial knowledge he would be.

It were a curious inquiry, were there anything like certain data on which to conduct it, to try to find out what might be the aggregate amount of wealth represented by the gentlemen on 'Change between the hours of four and five o'clock. There is, however, no such data. That such amount of wealth must be enormously great, there can be no doubt. Let it only be recollected that, as before stated, there are individuals from the great majority of the leading commercial houses in London, as well as from abroad, and it will at once be seen that the amount of wealth represented on 'Change must be astoundingly great. Rothschild alone, when alive, represented property to the extent of between 5,000,000*l.* and 6,000,000*l.* To be sure, there are few Rothschilds in the world; there are none in London; but there are, nevertheless, thousands in the city who are men of great opulence. To be worth 100,000*l.* or 200,000*l.* is no uncommon thing among metropolitan mer-

chants. Many can boast of possessing a quarter of a million, and a few even half a million and more. It is easy, then, to fancy what a vast aggregate of wealth there must be, in the supposed circumstances, represented by the individuals assembling in the Royal Exchange. Supposing the number of persons present at a given time were 5,000, and that on an average they were worth 20,000*l.* each—which surely, when it is recollected that Rothschild's successors stand there, is no extravagant supposition—that would give the aggregate amount of wealth at 100,000,000*l.*

I have referred to the late Nathan Rothschild being on 'Change. There he stood, day after day, leaning against a pillar on the right hand, as you enter from Cornhill. He was a little monarch on 'Change; and the pillar in question may be said to have been his throne,—with this difference, that while other monarchs sit on their wooden thrones, he leaned against his throne of granite. To that particular spot he was so devotedly attached, that no consideration would induce him to do business anywhere else. Ar,

dent as was his love of money, and great as were the sacrifices he would have made to increase his more than princely fortune, I question much if the temptation of some thousand pounds would have induced him to quit his favourite pillar. From that pillar he never moved. There he stood, nearly as stationary as the pillar itself, with his back resting against it, as if he could not have supported himself without its aid. With his note-book in his hand, he was always to be seen during the usual hour of business, entering into transactions of great extent with the merchants and commercial men of all countries. Little would the stranger, who chanced to see the prince of capitalists standing on the spot I have mentioned, have fancied, from his personal appearance, what an important influence he exerted on the destinies not only of 'Change, but of the country and Europe. Nothing could be more unprepossessing than his appearance. He was just such a man as the boys in the street would have thought a fine subject for "a lark,"—unless, indeed, they had

been deterred by the lowering expression or sullen aspect of his countenance. He always looked sulky. I question if he ever indulged in a smile. I am sure he never did on 'Change. There his features were never, so far as I could learn, known to relax their rigidity. I have been informed that he did in private, among his more intimate friends and relations, occasionally make an effort to smile; but never with any marked success. His smiles at best could never be said to be more than a species of spoiled grin. His countenance wore a thoughtful aspect; but I never could see anything in it that indicated intelligence. He looked stupid or clownish like. He had a good deal of the appearance of a farmer of the humbler class. His features were massy. He had a flat face. I have scarcely ever seen a Jewish countenance which had less in it of the conformation so characteristic of the faces of that people, than Rothschild's. His features seemed to be huddled together. There was nothing like regularity in them. His face was full, and unusually round. His nose had a

good deal of the cock-up form. His mouth was rather large, and his lips thick and prominent. His forehead was of more than an average height, considering the altitude of his face. His hair had something of a darkish hue, and was generally short. His complexion was pale; except where it was slightly tinged with colour by the weather. He was short and thick. He was considerably under the general height, though it is possible his pot-belly and corpulent appearance generally, may have made him appear shorter than he really was. Any time I saw him, he always wore a great-coat of a dark brown colour. He paid but little attention to his personal decoration. His tailor had no very difficult customer to please. From his appearance I should have inferred, that if he could but have abundance of room in his clothes, he never troubled himself as to the way in which Snip executed his task. I have no notion, however, that either his tailor or any other of his tradesmen would get off as easily on the question of price, as they did as to the taste with which they

executed their tasks. At home he was, as might have been expected, still less particular about his personal appearance. I could relate some extraordinary anecdotes on this subject which have never before appeared in print, and most probably never will; but I have my reasons for passing them over in silence.

It was one feature in Rothschild's conduct when on 'Change, which I have never seen noticed, that he never, except when engaged in business, entered into conversation with any of the thousands in the same place. There he stood, in the midst of the bustle on 'Change, apparently as deeply lost in thought, and with as melancholy a countenance, as if he had been alone in the vast wilderness of shade referred to by Cowper, or been the "Last Man" described by Campbell. I never knew a more striking illustration than he presented, of the possibility of one being in the depths of solitude while in the midst of the busiest and most bustling scenes which this busy and bustling metropolis presents. Whether his reserve was constitu-

tional, or whether it arose from the pride of purse, or whether from the magnitude of the matters which must have been ever occupying his mind, or whether from the conjoint operation of the three causes, I cannot positively say; but the fact of his reserve was as I have stated.

No man accustomed to reflection could see Rothschild on 'Change without feeling a train of interesting thoughts awakened in his bosom. A crowd of ideas always forced themselves on my mind whenever I saw him standing at his favourite pillar. I thought of the immense power which a being who had little personally or intellectually to recommend him had, not only in his adopted country, but throughout the civilised world. The public in general had no conception of the greatness of that power. Were the secrets of the last twenty years, as these relate to the different courts of Europe, and to the various aspects which matters both here and on the continent assumed during that period, revealed, it would be seen that he was a prime mover in many of the great scenes which

have passed before us, though an actor who always remained behind the scenes. He had in many cases the power of causing or preventing war, according as he felt disposed or not to loosen his purse-strings and to supply princes with the means of war. The peace of Europe thus often depended entirely on him. And how affecting the thought, that in deciding how he should act, whether he should or should not make the required advances to the crowned heads of Europe, he was not influenced by any considerations bearing on the great question of humanity, but merely by calculations as to the prudence of the thing, viewed simply as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence ! The vast amount of happiness or of misery dependent on the course he should adopt, never, it is fair to presume, entered for one moment into his thoughts, or influenced his decisions in any degree. It was his, I repeat, to let loose or restrain the demon of war with all its devastations and horrors, just as he thought fit to unloose or keep shut the strings of his ample purse: it

was in his power to subject the world itself to the ravages of war, or to avert the frightful calamity. The destinies of millions of our fellow-creatures were in his hands. How soon could he have made myriads of wives widows, and children fatherless ! How many mothers could he have, in the space of a few years, bereft of their sons ! And what multitudes of sisters could he have deprived of their brothers in the same short space ! For how many hundreds of thousands of men, in the prime of life, could he have prepared a premature grave ! To have looked on one whose personal appearance had less than that of most of his fellow-beings to recommend him, and to think that he possessed so vast a power over the fortunes of Europe, was one of the most melancholy reflections which could obtrude itself on the human mind. It is painful to think that mere wealth, without regard to the moral qualities of the possessor, should exercise so mighty an influence over the destinies not only of one country but of mankind. There must be something radically defective in the

condition of society, when mere wealth can enter so largely into the elements of human happiness or human misery. It is to be feared it will continue to be so until the dominion of wealth shall be overthrown, and for ever trampled under foot by the antagonist principle of knowledge,—not merely a scientific or philosophic knowledge,—but a knowledge based on the great truths of the Christian religion.

Rothschild, however, notwithstanding his vast and unparalleled opulence, has ceased to exist. Whatever influence it had on the monarchs of Europe, there was one monarch on whom it had none whatever. That monarch is Death. He asserts his dominion as unceremoniously and peremptorily over the most opulent and most distinguished, as over the poorest and most obscure. He is no respecter of persons. It is to be hoped that no human being, now that Rothschild is no more, will ever possess the same power, arising from the same causes, over the destinies of mankind, as he did.

But these are reflections I must not pursue

further. Since the death of Rothschild it were difficult to say what individual or what house, if any, has taken the lead on 'Change. It is doubtful, indeed, whether we shall ever see any one occupying his place there. To say nothing of him in his capacity of a loan-contractor, his transactions were often of a most extensive kind. It would be a most interesting piece of information, were it possible to obtain it, to know what may have been the amount of his transactions on 'Change from the day he first entered it till that on which he left it for ever. This, however, is information which will never be obtained. His own most intimate friends cannot have any idea of what the extent of his transactions on 'Change were from first to last.

Many persons suppose that a great deal of business, in the shape of buying and selling goods, is transacted on 'Change. This is a mistake. Some such transactions do take place; but they are neither so numerous nor important as one unacquainted with 'Change would be apt to imagine. The object of meeting there is not

so much with the view of making purchases, as in talking over all matters connected with commerce, making preliminary arrangements for entering into large speculations, and regulating the prices and the course of business. The bargains that are made are chiefly effected through the medium of merchant-brokers, who, as in the case of the brokers on the Stock Exchange, have an allowance of one-eighth, or half-a-crown per cent. on the amount of business done. If, for example, a merchant wishes to purchase a certain quantity of coffee, say twenty tons, he employs his broker to effect the sale, either stating the highest price he will give, or telling the broker to make the most favourable terms he can. The broker in such a case applies to the party on 'Change with whom he thinks he can most easily and satisfactorily do the business, telling him he wants a certain quantity of the article, and the price he is authorised to give, if peremptorily limited as to terms. The seller closes or not, according to circumstances, with the offer made.

One leading object of the Royal Exchange is to afford facilities for paying and receiving monies on mercantile transactions with foreign houses. Bills are drawn on or made payable to foreign houses for goods sent or received by London merchants. These bills are brought to 'Change, and through the intervention of the brokers, as in the case already supposed, are negotiated there. Some of the larger houses who have foreign connexions are always ready to receive these bills, asking no more than a trifling profit on the transaction. The terms are always regulated by the state of the exchanges, in relation to England, at the place at which the bills are drawn or made payable. I have heard that formerly houses were always ready to negotiate such bills on such terms as would afford them only half-a-crown or one-eighth per cent. on each 100*l.* for their trouble. Now, however, the thing is not done for such fractional profits, though the profits are still small.

The prices at which bills of exchange are

bought or sold do not vary, on undoubted bills, to any material extent on 'Change. A few of the leading brokers, after having ascertained the comparative demand and supply, fix the price among themselves, which price is strictly adhered to in all the more important transactions of the day. In cases, however, where a doubt exists as to the credit of the parties whose names are on bills, the prices do vary to a considerable extent, according to the strength or slightness of the doubt entertained. The bills which are bought and sold on the Royal Exchange are not always *bona fide* bills of exchange. It is understood, that of late years a great many fictitious bills purporting in some instances to be drawn on persons who never existed, and in others with real names with the permission of the parties, have been brought into the market merely as a matter of speculation. As, however, in all such cases the party purchasing takes care to see that the names of responsible persons are adhibited to the bills, if not as drawers or accepters, as indorsers, the

transaction, in so far as regards its practical results, is not attended with loss or injury to any one.

There are only two days in the week on which business of this kind is transacted. These are Tuesday and Friday. I have endeavoured to find something like probable data—as absolutely certain data were out of the question—by which to calculate the amount of money which may change hands on one of these days; but I find the thing is not to be had. A gentleman who has been many years on 'Change estimates the average amount, at the briskest season of the year, at from 150,000*l.* to 200,000*l.* On those occasions in which a foreign loan has been contracted, there is of course a very great increase in this description of business. It was supposed by those most conversant with such matters, that when the Messrs. Barings some years since contracted a loan of 6,000,000*l.* with France, the amount of money which changed hands on one of the days when the purchasers of scrip were paying their money, must have been at least 500,000*l.*

The affairs of the Royal Exchange are managed by the Gresham Committee. It is a common proverb in Scotland, that new lairds have new laws. An amusing illustration of this proverb was afforded nearly twenty years since, soon after the appointment, as a member of this committee, of an alderman celebrated for his partiality to turtle soup. Desirous of marking the commencement of his official career as a member of the committee in question, by something new, he succeeded in prevailing on the members to agree to an alteration in the hour of shutting up the place. No sooner had this determination been come to by the committee, than the aldermanic gentleman summoned the officers of the place into his presence. Obedient to his high behests they forthwith presented themselves. Putting his hands into his waistcoat pockets, and strutting through the committee-room with an air of infinite self-importance, he informed the officers of the resolution to which the committee had come. "And now," he added, pulling himself up and

speaking in a tone which was authoritative in the highest degree, "and now take care, on pain of losing your situations, that the place be cleared and the doors shut every night by five o'clock. No excuse admitted, remember; and no favour shown to any party, be that party who he may." The servants of the place bowed in the best way they could, and promised the most perfect obedience to the alderman's orders. The doors not having been before shut until six o'clock, it was with difficulty the poor fellows, notwithstanding the most exemplary use of handbells, and all the other exertions they could make, could effect even a partial clearance at five. A considerable number refused to stir a foot. What could the poor men do! The stern looks of the alderman, the night before, still haunted their minds, and his haughty tones were still ringing in their ears, notwithstanding all the noise they caused by their own bells. They, therefore, closed the doors on the refractory gentlemen who remained in the place.

After having confined them there about three hours, they, acting on the authority of some of the other members of the committee, opened one of the doors. Fancy their amazement and horror, when the first person among the prisoners that presented himself was the worthy alderman himself! He vowed vengeance in the shape of the immediate dismissal of the officers of the place, but one of the committee-men who was present when he gave such peremptory orders to shut the doors at five and to show no favour to any man, having interposed and reminded his aldermanic highness that they were only, as obedient servants, carrying his positive instructions into effect, he was obliged to let the matter pass over. Law-makers, says the old adage, should not be law-breakers. The alderman gave practical proof that he ever afterwards remembered this adage. He was most exemplary in setting an example of obedience to his own legislation; for no one ever again saw him on 'Change after a quarter to five.

The Royal Exchange is divided into a number of departments called walks. There is the Scotch walk, the French walk, the Dutch walk, the Italian walk, &c. &c. There is not, indeed, any country in the world of great commercial importance which has not its walk. The merchants and parties engaged in the business peculiar to the country thus singled out, are supposed to station themselves in their respective walks. This is done to a considerable extent, though you will by no means find that the different walks are adhered to with scrupulous closeness. By means, however, of these divisions of 'Change, one party can, in the great majority of cases, find out another party with the greatest ease, even when the number of gentlemen present may be between 4,000 or 5,000. The following sketch of the way in which the space on 'Change is divided among the leading commercial countries, will give a better idea of it than it were possible to do by mere verbal description :—

some of the more obvious principles connected with it. Political economists, and those who have large transactions on the Royal Exchange, speak of two kinds of exchange. The one is the *nominal*, the other is the *real* exchange. What is meant by the *nominal* exchange, may be understood by putting a single hypothetical case. Suppose the currency of France were seven and a-half per cent. below the Mint standard and purity, and the currency of England were on a par with the Mint standard and purity, then the nominal exchange as between France and England will be seven and a-half per cent. in favour of this country. But suppose, on the other hand, that the currency of this country were now, as it has been before, twelve per cent. depreciated below the Mint standard and purity, while in France the currency was only five per cent. degraded, then the nominal exchange, as between France and England, would be seven per cent. in favour of France, or against this country. The nominal exchange, therefore, is always regulated by the relative value of the currency of a country to the

Mint standard and purity, compared with the relative value of the currency to the Mint standard and purity in any given country with regard to which the state of exchange is sought to be ascertained.

The *real* exchange, again, between any two countries, is always limited by the expense which would be incurred in the transfer of bullion from one country to another. A merchant will prefer a bill of exchange for the purpose of remittance to another country, to the transmission of bullion, provided the premium charged on the bill do not exceed the cost of the transfer of the bullion; but if it should, then he will export the requisite amount of the precious metals to pay his debts to the foreign house with which he has transacted business. If, for example, a merchant in London owes 100*l.* to a house in Paris, and the premium on a bill on Paris were twenty shillings, he will decline to purchase a bill, if he can send over 100*l.* worth of bullion for ten shillings. But though the premium on bills can never exceed the amount of expense incurred

in the transfer of bullion from one country to another, there may be a great variation in the amount of premium and in the expenses of the transmission of bullion. In the time of war, for example, or when commercial intercourse between two countries is restricted, the expenses of transmitting bullion from one to another are necessarily increased, owing to the unavoidable augmentation in the freight, insurance, &c. The premium on bills of exchange, therefore, always bearing as it does a certain relation to the expenses of transmitting bullion, fluctuates very considerably at different times.

The real exchange between any two countries is regulated in a considerable degree by the supply and demand for bills. Supposing, for the sake of illustration, that any two given countries had an equal supply of bullion, and that the currency of each was either at its Mint standard, or that it was equally depreciated below that standard in the case of both countries, then the exchange will be in favour of whichever country has the least debts due to the

other. If London owes Paris a greater amount of debt than Paris owes London, then there will of necessity be a greater demand for bills on Paris than there will be in Paris for bills on London. The premium will consequently be greater in London for bills on Paris, than it will be in Paris for bills on London. The exchanges will, in other words, be in favour of France and against Great Britain; and they will be so in the supposed case to an extent proportioned to the greatness of the demand for bills in London on Paris. If, on the other hand, the debts due by Paris to London be greater than those due by London to Paris, then the demand for bills in Paris on London will be in the same relative proportion, and the premium on such bills will be correspondingly greater in Paris for bills on London, than in London for bills on Paris.

In calculating the actual state of the exchanges as between any two countries, it will be necessary to ascertain both the real and nominal exchange. This is always done by our mer-

chants before fixing the amount of premium on bills drawn on foreign countries. If, to illustrate this part of the subject, the nominal exchange be five per cent. in favour of France, as against this country, and the real exchange be one per cent. in favour of France, then the actual state of the exchange will be six per cent in favour of France and against this country. But as it often happens that the nominal exchange is in favour of a particular country while the real exchange is against it, then the merchant must ascertain the difference between the nominal and real exchange, which will give him the exact state of the exchange, as between the two countries. For instance, suppose the nominal exchange be five per cent. in favour of Paris, while the real exchange is one per cent. against it and in favour of this country, then the actual condition of the exchange as between the two countries, will be four per cent. in favour of France. If, again, the nominal rate of exchange in France be two per cent. in favour of this country, while the real exchange in England is two per cent.

against France, then the exchange between the two countries will be at par, and *vice versa*. In the case formerly supposed of the supply of bullion being equal in any two given countries, and the currency of each being of the Mint standard and purity, then the exchange between those two countries will depend entirely on the state of the real exchange; in other words, on the comparative supply and demand for bills on the two countries.

It sometimes happens that the *computed* exchange between this and another country may be favourable to us, while the real exchange is against us, and *vice versa*. This occurs when there is a difference between the nominal exchange and the nominal prices of this country and any other given country, while the price of bullion is the same in both. Mr. Blake, as quoted by Mr. Maculloch, gives a supposed example with the view of illustrating this. He says—"Suppose the computed exchange between Hamburgh and London to be one per cent. against this country, and that this arises

from a real exchange which is favourable to the amount of four per cent., and a nominal exchange which is unfavourable to the extent of five per cent.; let the real price of bullion at Hamburgh and London be precisely the same, and consequently, the nominal prices different by the amount of the nominal exchange, or five per cent.; now, if the expenses of freight, insurance, &c., on the transit of bullion from Hamburgh, are three per cent., it is evident that a profit would be derived from the import of that article, notwithstanding the *computed* exchange was one per cent. against us. In this case the merchant must give a premium of one per cent. for the foreign bill, to pay for the bullion. 100*l.* worth of bullion at Hamburgh would therefore cost him 101*l.*, and the charges of importation would increase the sum to 104*l.* Upon the subsequent sale, then, for 105*l.* of depreciated currency in the home market, he would derive from the transaction a profit of 1*l.* This sum is precisely the difference between the real exchange and the expenses of transit, that part of

the computed exchange which depends on the nominal producing no effect; since whatever is lost by its unfavourable state, is counterbalanced by a corresponding inequality of nominal prices."

From the observations I have made, it will be seen how it happens that when the exchanges are against us, the gold flows out of this country; and how, on the other hand, when the exchanges are in our favour, there is an influx of gold to our ports from foreign countries.

In negotiating bills of exchange it often happens that the party in London who has a debt to pay some foreign house, does not discharge that debt by a direct remittance to the place where the debt is due. He must, before making the remittance, ascertain the state of exchanges not only between this country and that to which he means to make his remittance, but between the latter and other countries. Mr. Maculloch, in one of his articles, illustrates this point in a manner as clear as it is capable of being made to the ordinary reader. He says—"When a

merchant in London means to discharge a debt due by him in Paris, it is his business to ascertain, not only the direct state of exchange between London and Paris, and consequently the sum which he must pay in London for a bill on Paris equivalent to his debt, but also the state of exchange between London and Hamburgh, Hamburgh and Paris, &c.; for it frequently happens that it will be more advantageous for him to buy a bill on Hamburgh, Amsterdam, or Lisbon, and to direct his agent to invest the proceeds in a bill on Paris, rather than remit directly to the latter. This is termed the *arbitration* of exchange. Thus, for example, if the exchange between London and Amsterdam be 35*s.* Flemish per pound sterling, and between Paris and Amsterdam 1*s.* 6*d.* Flem. per franc, then, in order to ascertain whether a direct or indirect remittance to Paris would be most advantageous, we must calculate what would be the value of the franc in English money if the remittance were made through Holland; for if it be less than that resulting from the direct exchange, it

will obviously be the preferable mode of remitting. This is determined by stating, as, 35s. Flemish (the Amsterdam currency in 1*l.* sterling) : 1*l.* 6*d.* Flemish (the Amsterdam currency in a franc) : : 1*l.* : 10*d.*, the proportional or *arbitrated* value of the franc. Hence, if the English money, or bill of exchange, to pay a debt on Paris, were remitted by Amsterdam, it would require 10*d.* to discharge a debt of a franc, or 1*l.* to discharge a debt of 24 francs ; and, therefore, if the exchange between London and Paris were twenty-four, it would be indifferent to the English merchant whether he remitted directly to Paris, or indirectly *via* Amsterdam ; but if the exchange between London and Paris were *above* twenty-four, then a direct remittance would be preferable ; while, if, on the other hand, the direct exchange were less than twenty-four, the indirect remittance ought as plainly to be preferred.”

I have thus glanced at the subject of the exchanges, as it is so intimately connected with the Royal Exchange. It is one about which we see

something in every newspaper we take into our hands; it is one, moreover, of the greatest interest to all classes of the community; for from the state of exchanges as between this and other countries, we may, in most cases, infer our real condition as a commercial community.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD BAILEY.

General remarks—Description of the place—Observations about the proceedings—Central Criminal Courts Act—Prisoners' Counsel Bill—Counsel practising at the Old Bailey—Passing sentence on prisoners convicted—Amusing scenes in the course of the trials—Anecdote of the late Mr. Justice Buller—Witty observations sometimes made by prisoners when sentence is passed—Miscellaneous observations—Mr. Curtis—The Recorder.

THE Old Bailey is to a large class of the metropolitan community a very important place. It is constantly present to the minds of many: there are thousands in London who think of nothing else,—when they condescend to think at all. It haunts them by day; it disturbs their slum-

bers by night. The very name grates on their ears : mention it abruptly in their hearing, and they start and turn as pale as did the Queen of Denmark when young Hamlet pressed home on her by implication, the murder of his father. Why is the Old Bailey, it will be asked, constantly before the minds of the persons referred to? Why so great a bugbear to them? Why have they so great a horror of the very name? Because, conscious of deserving a temporary lodgment in it, with the unpleasant consequences which follow, they live in the constant apprehension of it. These, however, are not the most confirmed criminals : the latter class have been too hardened by guilt to have any thought or fear on the subject.

But though the interest attaching to the Old Bailey is peculiarly great in the case of the parties to whom I allude, it is a subject which from the prominence with which some unfortunate circumstances or other always keep it before the public, is more or less interesting to all.

Independently of what is going on in the in-

terior during the sitting of the Central Criminal Courts, the scene exhibited outside is always well worth seeing. But to be seen to the greatest advantage, one should visit the place on a Monday morning when the courts open. On the street outside, in the place leading to the New Court and in the large yard then thrown open opposite the stairs leading to the Old Court, there is always, at such a time, a great concourse of what may be called mixed society with a propriety I have seldom seen equalled in any other case. There you see both sexes, in great numbers. There are persons of all ages, of every variety of character, and in every diversity of circumstances. There are the prosecutors and the witnesses for and against the prosecution. The judges and the persons to be tried are the only parties you miss. A considerable number of those you see, are the relatives and friends of the prisoners; but, perhaps, a still larger number consist of confirmed thieves, whose moral feelings, if they ever had any, are so completely blunted by a long and

daring perseverance in crime, that they can be present at the trial of others without ever troubling themselves about their own guilt. It is amazing to see the number of such persons in the galleries, when the proceedings have commenced. Some of them go from a sheer love of being present at the trial of criminals like themselves. Others, and a considerable part of them, are attracted to the place because some of their acquaintances—their coadjutors in some previous crime—have got themselves, to use their own phraseology, into trouble. But on other days as well as on the first day, at the commencement of the proceedings in the courts, the place outside is more or less crowded with all the varieties of character to which I have adverted. As the sessions draw towards a close the numbers diminish. It is not, however, only at the opening of the courts in the morning, that there is a crowd of persons outside the Old Bailey: a great number are to be seen hanging on all day long. These chiefly consist of parties who are either prosecutors, witnesses, or

the relatives of the prisoners to be tried. In the area leading to the New Court, that area being much more comfortable than the place leading to the Old Court, the attendance is always greatest. There is nothing but bustle and confusion. Every one is walking about, and every one is talking, if not to anybody else, to himself. A silent or motionless person would be quite a curiosity there.

The Old Bailey is divided into two courts. Formerly there was only one court; but for a number of years past there have been two. The one last established is called the New Court; the court which previously existed is called the Old Court. The most important cases are usually disposed of in the Old Court; indeed the New Court is rather looked on as an assistant to the other than as being on an equality with it. Some of the judges, according to arrangements among themselves and the Recorder, usually preside in the Old Court. Mr. Serjeant Arabin and Mr. Common Serjeant Mirehouse administer justice in the New. It is necessary that

one or more of the aldermen of the city, or the Sheriff of London, be present on the bench while the trials are proceeding. They seldom, however, take any part in what is going on. The Sheriff, usually attended by his under-sheriff, seems to have no ambition to gratify in sitting on the bench, beyond that of being seen to advantage with his gold chain around his neck. As for the aldermen, again, as they have no such imposing badge of office to display, nothing indeed but their plain aldermanic gowns, you almost always find them engaged in reading the newspapers.

The New Court does not sit the first day of the session. The ceremony of opening the sessions always takes place in the Old Court, the presence of all the jurymen and other parties interested in the trials being required there while the Recorder delivers the charge.

The interior of both courts is tastefully fitted up. They have of late been re-altered and repaired at an expense of several thousand pounds. The judges in either court sit on the north side.

Immediately below them are the counsel, all seated around the table. Directly opposite the bench is the bar, and above it, but a little further back, is the gallery. The jury sit, in the Old Court, on the right of the bench; in the New Court they sit on the left of the bench. The witness-box is, in both courts, at the farthest end of the seats of the jury. The reporters, in both courts, sit opposite the jury.

The proceedings at the Old Bailey are usually much more interesting than those in courts of law. The parties tried are generally persons whose mode of life has imparted something of peculiarity to their characters. The circumstances under which the offences charged have been committed are, for the most part, of a singular kind, while the rapidity with which, one witness succeeds another, and the ludicrous scenes which are so often exhibited in the examination of witnesses, give altogether so much variety and interest to the proceedings, that it is impossible for any one ever to tire of them. Hence, both courts are usually full of specta-

tors: nay, such is the interest which some persons take in the proceedings, that they will scarcely, on certain occasions, be absent for an hour from the commencement to the close of the sessions. They will even pay their sixpences every day for admission to the galleries, though the consequence should be the privation of a dinner for eight days to come.

Before the Central Criminal Courts' Act came into operation, which was in 1834, the Old Bailey sessions were only held eight times a year. Since then, the extension of the jurisdiction of these courts to part of Kent, Essex, and Surrey, has been followed by so great an addition to the Calendar, that the number of trials each session—the courts now sit twelve times a year—are as large as before. The average number of cases at each sessions is about three hundred. The comparative prevalency of the various offences with which the prisoners are charged will be inferred from the following table respecting the parties convicted in the course of 1836:—

Bigamy	4
Burglary	41
Cattle Stealing	3
Child Stealing	2
Coining	10
Cutting and wounding with intent to murder	6
Embezzlement	25
Forging and uttering forged instruments	12
Horse stealing	7
Housebreaking	36
Larceny, &c.	734
Larceny in a dwelling-house, above 5l.	61
Letter, stealing from the Post-office a	3
Letter, sending a threatening	1
Manslaughter	8
Misdemeanour	168
Perjury	2
Rape	1
Receiving stolen goods	35
Robbery	21
Sacrilege	1
Sheep stealing	4
Shooting at with intent to Murder	4
Transportation, returning from	1
<hr/>	
Total.	1190

The usual proportion of acquittals to the convictions may be conjectured with a confidence amounting to certainty, when I mention that at one of the late sessions they stood thus:—Acquittals 96, convictions 202, making about one acquittal for two convictions.

In October, last year, the Prisoners' Counsel Bill came into operation, and the consequence, as was to be expected, has been the protraction of each session, and an increased expense. Formerly the average duration of the sittings was seven days: now it is ten. Counsel are now allowed to address the jury; formerly they were restricted to an examination and cross-examination of the witnesses. The permission to make a speech has been turned to good account. Addresses of considerable length are made by the counsel on either side in every important case, which circumstance accounts for the protraction of the sittings. The expenses of each session used formerly to average something less than 350l.: now they exceed 800l.

Sir Peter Laurie and others have strenuously objected to the Prisoners' Counsel Bill on two grounds. The first is, that it leads to the more frequent acquittal of guilty parties. The second objection is, the great additional expense incurred.

With regard to the first objection, did it never occur to Sir Peter and the other gentlemen to whom I refer, that if the consequence of the prisoner's counsel being allowed to address the jury be the escape, in some few instances, of the guilty, the consequence of the previous want of such permission was the conviction of the innocent? The probability is immeasurably greater that the innocent formerly suffered, than that the guilty now escape. The prisoner, in the great majority of cases, is not only unacquainted with the forms of the court, and has none of the dexterity of counsel, but his mind is too much affected by the unpleasantness and perilousness of his situation to be able so far to collect his thoughts, as to turn the circumstances, which he may know to be in his favour, to their proper account. By giving him the benefit of an address to the jury, on the part of his counsel, he is only put in a better situation to establish his innocence, if he be innocent, than he was before. If the result of such a privilege, should be in some cases the acquittal of a guilty person, that

is an evil which is scarcely worthy of the name, compared with that of convicting the innocent. "Better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man suffer !" So said the excellent Sir Matthew Hale, and so say justice and humanity. He is not a fit subject for being reasoned with, who would maintain that a man's right to establish his innocence, if he can do so, should be taken from him because a guilty party, by availing himself of the same permission, may contrive to delude the jury into the belief that he is innocent. It is one of the clearest dictates of reason, humanity, and justice, that no means by which a man may establish his innocence should be withheld from him. Besides, Sir Peter Laurie and those who like him are haunted with apprehensions that the consequence of the new course at the Old Bailey may in some instances be the escape of the guilty,—should console themselves with the reflection that the probability is, that those who escape on one occasion will be convicted and duly punished on some future one ; for it will be

found in the far greater number of cases, that those who have committed one offence will go on committing others until they have, to use their own expressive phraseology, got themselves fairly booked for Botany Bay, or some other place of punishment.

As regards the objection grounded on the additional expense, it is unworthy a moment's notice. No expense can be too great where the ends of justice are to be promoted. And what, after all, is the expense in this case? Something more than double what it was, it is true; but still it is an expense which will not be felt by the community; and even though it were, they would not, under the circumstances, complain of it.

But this is a digression; my justification of it is in the importance of the subject. The Old Bailey courts sit from nine in the morning, till nine, ten, and sometimes eleven at night. Nine is the usual time for rising; but when a case goes on up to that hour, the courts usually sit until it is finished. From the meeting of the

courts in the morning, till five in the afternoon, country juries sit. From five to the rising of the courts, London juries sit.

The number of counsel usually attending the Old Bailey, is from twenty to twenty-five; but the business may be said to be monopolised by five or six. The four gentlemen who have the largest share of business are Mr. Charles Phillips, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Adolphus, and Mr. Bodkin. Mr. Phillips, I am inclined to think, makes more money by his Old Bailey practice than any other counsel. Mr. Clarkson is, no doubt, next to him. In the course of one session, some years ago, Mr. Phillips was employed in no fewer than 110 cases. And it is nothing uncommon for him to be counsel in from 700 to 800 cases in one year. I will not undertake to give an estimate of the annual receipts of either of the gentlemen I have named, from their Old Bailey business, because I have no data on which I can confidently ground such estimate. Their fees vary, according to the circumstances of the parties by whom they are employed, and the

importance of the case, from one to ten guineas. Taking their average amount of fees at three guineas, which possibly is not far from the fact, Mr. Phillips's practice at the Old Bailey would be worth from 2,000*l.* to 2,500*l.* per annum.

The average number of cases daily tried at the Old Bailey can easily be inferred from the fact of three hundred being disposed of, according to the new system, in ten days. I have known instances, however, in which in the New Court alone, from forty to fifty cases have been decided in one day. The most protracted trial ever known, I believe, to have taken place at the Old Bailey, was one last year, arising out of a death which was caused by the racing of two omnibuses. The trial lasted five days.

Very few of the prisoners receive sentence at the time of their conviction. Most of them are brought up to the bar of the New Court, when all the cases have been disposed of, to receive their respective sentences. They are sentenced in classes. Five or six, or some other limited number of them, who are destined to receive the

same amount and description of punishment, are called up at a time, and the Recorder, naming them individually, or “each and all of them,” as the technical phrase is, pronounces the sentence of the court on them. I have sometimes seen fifty or sixty poor creatures standing at the bar at the same time. And a more affecting spectacle, before all is over, is seldom witnessed. The desperate bravado is visibly depicted in the countenances of some; while the anxious mind, the palpitating heart, and the deepest feeling of sorrow and shame, are as clearly to be seen in the countenances of others. The transition from one emotion of mind to another, is sometimes exceedingly violent and sudden. I have seen the down-cast eye and the trembling frame of the prisoner who expected some severe punishment, succeeded in a moment by the most manifest tokens of joy, when the punishment to be inflicted was comparatively lenient. I have seen, on the other hand, persons—female prisoners especially—who had remained unmoved up to the last moment, as cheerful and composed

as if nothing had been the matter, because they laid the flattering unction to their souls that they would get off with a few months' imprisonment, or some very lenient punishment,—turn pale as death, look for a moment wildly about them, then close their eyes, and uttering a heart-rending shriek, fall down in a swoon, when the sentence of transportation for life has been passed upon them. Such a sentence comes with a most appalling power, even to the strongest-minded and most hardened criminals of our own sex, when it comes unexpectedly. To many, I am convinced, from what I have myself witnessed, such a sentence is armed with more terrors than would be even death itself. They look on it virtually as death in so far as all their friends are concerned; while the imagination pictures to itself, very often in deeper colours than the reality warrants, the horrors of that state of slavery which can only close with the close of their life.

But these are not the only affecting scenes which are witnessed at the Old Bailey. It is

often a most touching thing to look on the party at the bar, coupled with the circumstances under which such party stands there. In many cases it is a first offence, and the prisoner may perhaps have been prompted to it by stern necessity. I have seen a mother stand at the bar of the Old Bailey charged with stealing a loaf of bread; and I have seen it proved beyond all question, that the woman had been induced to commit the offence in order to save her children from starvation. I have seen a poor mother, in other circumstances, charged with a very trivial offence, with an infant hanging at her breast, standing pale and trembling at the same bar. I have seen the child looking in its mother's face, and playing its innocent tricks, while every word which the witnesses were speaking against her, went like so many daggers to her bosom. I have seen this woman torn from her children,—they consigned to the workhouse,—and she sentenced to transportation for life. I have seen on repeated occasions the father appear as prosecutor against his own son. I have seen him

shed tears in profusion while he stated the circumstances under which he had been compelled to appear in a situation so revolting to his feelings. I have seen the mother prosecuting her own daughter, and with a heart sobbing so violently as to render her words inarticulate, beseech the court to transport her, in order to save her from a worse and still more ignominious fate. These are affecting scenes which are far from uncommon at the Central Criminal Courts.

Were a stranger to drop into the Old Bailey while the process of passing sentence is being gone through, without being aware of the nature of the place, he would form a thousand conjectures as to the character of the business transacting in his presence, before he hit on the right one. Counsel, reporters, spectators, everybody, look as unconcerned as if nothing were the matter. The alderman, if there be only one on the bench, is, you may depend on it, reading the newspaper; if there are two of them, they are joking and laughing together. The scene altogether has certainly, in ordinary circumstances,

more the appearance of comedy than of tragedy in it.

This is to be regretted; but it is perhaps in some measure a necessary consequence of the frequent repetition of the same sort of proceedings. It is curious to reflect on the influence which familiarity with anything has on the human mind. Scenes which in the first instance most powerfully affect one's feelings, cease to make any impression whatever, or to be looked on in any other light than as mere matters of course, when we become habituated to them.

But there is one part of the proceedings at the Old Bailey when the ceremony of passing sentence is being gone through, for which no extenuation can be offered. I refer to the practice of passing the sentence of death on groups of prisoners convicted of offences of lesser magnitude, when it is not intended that such sentence shall be carried into effect. This is a species of solemn judicial trifling, to call it by no harsher name, which cannot be too severely reprobated; it is practically to make the judge

utter a falsehood : what other construction can be put on his gravely telling an unfortunate person that he will be executed when nothing of the kind is in reality intended ? To be sure, it is not the judge's fault : he cannot help himself : the anomalous and absurd constitution of the law on the subject imposes on him the necessity of acting as he does. It is gratifying to find, that government have it in contemplation to do away with this most unbecoming state of things. Nothing could be more calculated to inspire contempt for the law of the land, than the witnessing the enactment of this solemn farce month after month at the Old Bailey. I am sure the judge himself must often deeply regret that the duty should be imposed on him of passing a sentence which it is not meant to carry into effect ; for in addition to the abstract impropriety of the thing, he must be pained to see the prisoners on whom the sentence of death is in such cases pronounced, laughing, and winking, and making faces at their acquaintances in the gallery, while he is performing his part of the solemn farce.

But let me now turn to some of those amusing, and oftentimes ludicrous scenes which are so frequently to be met with at the Old Bailey. A person who has not been present could hardly think it possible that so much cause for laughter could occur in a place appropriated to the administration of criminal justice. Usually the most fruitful source of merriment is found in the examination of witnesses. Mr. Charles Phillips is celebrated for his tact in extracting the laughable and ludicrous from witnesses, while subjecting them to the process of an examination or cross-examination. And yet it is a matter of frequent occurrence for him and other counsel to be completely put down by some happy and unexpected observation of the witnesses whom they are trying to make ridiculous. Not long since, I saw an intelligent looking female, seemingly about thirty-five years of age, turn the laugh against the counsel—one of the most eminent at the Old Bailey—who was trying to show off his wit at her expense. After asking whether she was married, and be-

ing answered in the negative, he put the question to her—"Have you ever, madam, had the offer of a husband?"

The witness paused for a moment, evidently thinking with herself that the question was one which she was not called on to answer.

Counsel—Perhaps, madam, you may think the question an improper one; but—

Witness—It *is* an improper one.

Counsel—Pardon me, ma'am, but it is one which I must insist upon being answered. Have you ever had the offer of a husband?

Witness—(Looking to the judge) I cannot see what it has to do with the present case.

Counsel—It's not, madam, what you can see, but it's what I ask, that you have to do with. Pray come, do tell me at once, have you ever had the offer of a husband?

Witness—Do you mean to propose yourself, Mr. —, that you seem so anxious to know?

A burst of laughter proceeded from the bench, the jury, the other counsel, and all parts of the court, at this retort, which derived an infinite

additional force from the peculiar manner in which it was delivered.

Counsel—Well, ma'am, as you seem disinclined to answer the question, I take it for granted that you have had no such offer.

Witness—That's *your* opinion, is it, Mr. —?

Counsel—It is, madam.

Witness—Then allow me, Sir, to inform you that you are quite mistaken.

Counsel—O, then, you *have* had an offer of a husband, have you, Miss ——? May I take the liberty of asking how it happens that you did not accept the offer?

Witness—That is my affair, not yours, Mr. ——

Counsel—Really, Miss ——, you seem inclined to be impertinent.

Witness—Then, I am only following the example you have set me, Mr. ——.

Here again a peal of laughter proceeded from all parts of the court, to the manifest mortification of the counsel. Annoyed at the thought

of being discomfited by a female, he resumed his interrogatories.

Counsel—What may your age be, madam? perhaps you will condescend to tell us that.

Witness—I'm old enough to give my evidence, and that is all you have anything to do with.

Counsel—Allow me, Miss ——, to tell you that you know nothing of what I may or may not have to do with it.

Witness—Then if I don't know what you have to do with it, I sha'n't tell you my age.

Counsel—I insist, madam, on knowing what is your age.

Witness—If you are so anxious to know, you'll find it in the parish register.

A deafening shout of laughter again proceeded from all parts of the court. Mr. —— looked amazingly foolish.

Counsel—Well, madam, you have no doubt sufficient reasons for maintaining this reserve about your age. Perhaps you would have no

objection to tell us whether you have any expectations of ever being married?

Witness—I'll answer no such impertinent question, Mr. ———.

Counsel—Really Miss ———, you seem determined to be very saucy to day.

Witness—That is the only way to deal with such persons as you.

Counsel—Come, come, now, Miss ———, do tell us whether you would accept of a husband if you had another offer of one?

Witness—That would depend on circumstances, Mr. ———. I certainly would not accept of such a conceited, impertinent fellow as you.

Counsel—Stay, stay, Miss ———, it's time enough to refuse me when I offer myself to you.

Witness—O, but I wish to tell you in time, that you may save yourself the trouble.

Here a loud peal of laughter again burst simultaneously from all parts of the court; and Mr. ———, finding he had caught a tartar, pro-

ceeded to examine the witness as to the real points of the case, which related to the stealing of some articles from a dwelling-house.

The dexterity which some of the younger prisoners—for those, I have always observed, who are from fourteen to eighteen years of age are usually the cleverest—display in cross-examining the witnesses against them is often surprising. I have seen many prisoners manifest an acuteness in this respect which I have never seen surpassed by the examinations of the most practised counsel. I have frequently on such occasions thought with myself, that some unlucky star must have been in the ascendant at the time of their birth, and that instead of being pickpockets they ought to have been lawyers. From the numerous specimens I have seen of dexterity of this kind on the part of juvenile offenders during their trials at the Old Bailey, I am convinced that Botany Bay swarms with legal geniuses of the highest order, though circumstances, unfortunately for themselves, have prevented their talents being turned into their

proper channel. At the December sessions of last year, a striking illustration of the singular acuteness displayed at their trials by some juvenile offenders, was given. Four prisoners, whose several ages varied from fifteen to eighteen, were put to the bar, charged with having stolen a chest of tea from a cart in Shore-ditch. The policeman who made the discovery was only, in the first instance, able to take one of the number into custody. The others were soon after apprehended, and were all lodged in the station-house. There was no question as to the identity of the one the watchman caught in the act, but the other three stoutly declared they knew nothing of each other. Two out of the three subjected the policeman to one of the most rigid and ingenious cross-examinations I have ever witnessed; but I am not, at this distance of time, able to give the questions and answers in that connexion which could convey any idea of the acuteness of the prisoners. I remember that one fact on which the policeman laid great stress, as proving that the prisoners

were all connected with the theft, was, that on going to the watchhouse at a late hour in the evening, he overheard one say to the others—“ Vy, if so be as one on us go, we’ll all on us go;” on which another struck up some sort of a song the chorus of which was—“ Across the water we vill go—across the water we vill go.” This the policeman understood to mean that they all expected transportation. He added, that afterwards the whole four joined with a heartiness he had never seen surpassed, in some flash song. One of the prisoners, the one who stood next to the jury, on the witness concluding this part of his evidence, observed, that he had a question or two to ask the policeman. “ Very well,” said the Recorder, “ put them to him.”

Prisoner—Vaut makes you think that ven one said, “ Vy, if so be as one on us go, ve’ll all on us go,” it meant as how we expected to be transported?

Witness—I don’t know; but that was my impression.

Prisoner—Vas it not as likely as how we

meant that all on us were to go to our trial at this ere bar?

The witness here hesitated a few seconds, and the prisoner winked knowingly at the other prisoner nearest to him.

Prisoner—Might it not, I say, a' meant this ere Old Bailey?

Witness—It might, certainly; but my impression was, that it meant what I have said.

Prisoner—It might, certainly: please, my Lord, to take that down. We have nothink to do with this ere person's impressions.

The prisoner pointed to the witness as he spoke, and gave another significant twinkle of his eye to his fellow-prisoner farthest off.

Prisoner—You said as how you heard one of us sing something about going across the vater.

Witness—I did.

Prisoner—Vell, and vaut about it? Is one's liberty to be taken from him 'cos as how he sings a song? And, my Lord, I should jist like to ax your Lordship vether a person cannot sing

about crossing the vater without being sent across the vater?

A shout of laughter followed the latter question.

Recorder—That, certainly, will not of itself be the means of sending you across the seas.

Prisoner—Thank your Lordship. Jist one or two more questions to you (addressing himself to the witness). You said as how you heard all on us a singing a flash song.

Witness—I did.

Prisoner—Vaut was the song about?

Witness—I don't know that.

Prisoner—Can you repeat any part of it?

Witness—I cannot.

Prisoner—How then do you know as how it was a song at all?

Witness—Because you were all singing it.

Prisoner—How do you know as how it vas a flash song?

Witness—That was my impression.

Prisoner here turned from the witness to the

Recorder and the jury, and exclaimed—"My Lord, and gentlemen of the jury, you see as how 'es come to impressions again." Then fixing his eye again stedfastly on the prisoner, he said—"Sir, do you know vat flash means?"

Witness—I do.

Prisoner—Then per'aps as how you would have no objection to let's hear it: vat is flash?

The witness hesitated for some time.

Prisoner—He's a takin' good time to give us his answer any how, observed the prisoner, looking expressively at the jury.

Prisoner—I ax'd you vout the meanin' of flash is?

Witness (falteringly)—Why it means—it just means—flash.

Loud laughter followed from all parts of the court, in which the bench joined.

Prisoner (addressing himself to the court)—My Lord, and gentlemen, there's a witness for you to swear away our rights and liberties. I von't ax that ere witness no more questions.

The witness then withdrew, and others were examined. When the whole evidence was taken, the same prisoner went as minutely into it as the most experienced judge could have done, and pointed out with an ingenuity and clearness I have never seen surpassed, the slightest discrepancy or improbability that could be detected in it. It was still, however, too strong for him and his companions in crime. A verdict of guilty was returned, and the sentence of the court was, that "Across the water they should go."

On some occasions, I have seen clever prisoners overreach themselves at the Old Bailey, and undo by a single unguarded expression, all that they had done in their own favour by the ingenious manner in which they had cross-examined the leading witnesses against them. About six months ago a little rascal, not more than fourteen years of age, was charged by a merchant in Long Acre with having broken into his premises at twelve o'clock at night, and stolen various articles. Having been alarmed in the

act, he escaped into the street, but being closely pursued was soon taken. He stoutly denied having committed the offence for which he was arraigned; and said he would soon convince the jury, by putting a few questions to the prosecutor, that he had been taken up by mistake. The prisoner then put a string of questions to the prosecutor, which had the effect of causing some doubt in the minds of the jury as to the identity of the offender. After having finished his cross-examination, the little fellow said he hoped he had got enough out of the witness to show that no reliance could be placed on his testimony, and then observed with an air of supreme scorn towards the prosecutor, and of infinite self-importance, that he had done with him. The prosecutor was in the act of quitting the witness-box, when the prisoner, addressing himself to the Recorder, said—"My Lord, though I'll have nothing more to do with that person," looking contemptuously towards the prosecutor, "per'aps you will ask him a single question."

“O certainly,” said his Lordship; “as many as you please. Prosecutor, stand up again.”

The prosecutor stood up again in the witness-box.

“Now, then,” said his Lordship, addressing himself to the prisoner, “what question would you wish me to put to the witness?”

“Just be kind enough to ax him whether the robbery was committed in the dark or by candle-light,” said the prisoner.

“Witness, you hear the question of the prisoner: was the robbery committed in the dark or by candle light?” inquired the Recorder.

“In the dark, my Lord,” answered the prosecutor.

“O what a ——— lie,” shouted the prisoner; “for I had a lighted candle ven I did it.”

The court was convulsed with laughter at the singular rudeness and energy of manner with which the juvenile rogue made the remark.

late admission he had thus unguarded across his mind in a moment. There were two accusations against him; but they had it their own way: he awaited his doom in sullen silence. That doom was twelve months imprisonment in the House of Correction.

It may be right to mention, that the cause of the prosecutor's mistake about the business was, that though the prisoner had a lighted candle with him when in the act of committing the theft, his being suddenly alarmed by steps on the staircase, caused him to extinguish the light while hurrying to the door, so that the prosecutor did not see it.

By far the most amusing scene which has occurred for a considerable time past, was exhibited a few years ago. Two fellows had been put to the bar on a charge of stealing three geese. Three of these fowls had been stolen from the prosecutor, and the same number of geese had been found in the possession of the prisoners on

the following day. The whole question, therefore, before the court turned on the identity of the geese. The prisoners knew that it would be much more difficult to establish the identity of the "articles" stolen in this case than it was usually found to be in the case of other articles. They consequently declared in the most positive manner, that the geese which had been found in their possession, were not, and never had been, the property of the prosecutor. The principal witness as to the fact of identity was the prosecutor's daughter, and she being rather a soft young woman who had been all her life in the country, the fellows thought they could easily, to use their own expression, "bother" her when in the witness-box. On being put there, the first important question the judge put was,— "Are you quite sure that these three birds are your father's property?"

Witness—Quite sure, my Lord.

Judge—As most geese are so like each other, have you any peculiar means of identi-

fyng those found in the possession of the prisoners, as having been part of the contents of your father's dairy?

Witness—Yes, my Lord.

Judge—Would you be so good to as tell us how you know they are your father's geese?

Witness—I know by their cackle, my Lord.

Here a burst of laughter proceeded from all parts of the court.

Judge—I had always thought there was no great difference in the cackle of geese.

“No more there is, my Lord,” interrupted one of the prisoners, in a gruff tone of voice.

Judge (to the prisoner)—Will you allow me to finish what I am going to say?

Prisoner—Certainly, I ax your Lordship's pardon for the hinterrupshin.

Judge—Are you sure you may not be mistaken as to the point, young woman?

Witness—There is no mistake, my Lord.

Judge—Can you describe any peculiarity in the cackle of your father's geese which makes you so confident as to their identity?

The witness was quite confounded by this question. She was silent.

“Oey, show us how your ’uns cackle,” exclaimed the same prisoner, looking exultingly in the face of the witness.

The other prisoner rubbed his hands, while there was a most expressive leer in his countenance, at the perplexing request of his associate in crime.

The court was convulsed with laughter, and the simple witness was still more confounded than before. In a short time she partially recovered her presence of mind.

Judge—Do not be alarmed, young woman, the court will not be so unreasonable as to ask you to comply with the prisoner’s request and imitate the cackling of a goose. Should you know the birds if you saw them again?

Witness—Yes, my Lord, I should.

Judge—Officer, just produce the geese and show them to the witness. A peal of laughter followed the injunction.

“All of them at once, my Lord?” said the officer.

“No, one goose is enough at a time,” observed his Lordship, amidst deafening shouts of laughter.

One of the geese was accordingly taken out of a sort of cage in which the three had been brought to court, and put on the breast of the witness-box, amidst roars of laughter. The way in which the officer held the bird in his hand for fear it should escape, was not the least ludicrous part of the scene.

“Is that one of your father’s geese?” asked his Lordship.

The poor girl looked hard at it, and said she thought it was, but was not quite sure unless she heard it cackle.

The goose, as if comprehending in the clearest manner what was going on, uttered a tremendous cackle that instant which made the walls of the court resound again. The poor bird’s cackling, however, it is right to add, was immediately drowned amidst the roars of laughter which proceeded from all parts of the house, caused partly by the cackling of the bird and partly by the irresistibly droll effect produced by one

of the officers singing out, "Silence there! Silence in the court!" The poor functionary was standing at the door at the time in earnest conversation with an acquaintance, and consequently very naturally mistook the cackling of a feathered goose for a noise caused by a goose of another description.

"That is one of my father's geese," observed the girl, as soon as the cackling of the bird and the loud laughter in the court, would allow her voice to be heard. "That is one of my father's geese."

"Then, officer, put that one away," said his Lordship, "and produce another."

The goose as in the former case was put on the front of the box, the officer holding it in the same way as before.

"I wonder," said his Lordship, "whether this bird is to afford as prompt an opportunity of identification as the other."

"O!" said the witness, looking at its feet, just as his Lordship made the observation, "O, I can prove this to be my father's goose already."

“What! without cackling?” said the judge.

“Yes, please your Lordship,” said the witness.

“Well, in what way?” inquired his Lordship.

“By its feet, my Lord: I marked the webbing of its feet when a gosling.”

“You are quite sure that it is your father’s property?” said his Lordship.

“Quite sure of it, my Lord.”

“Then let that goose be removed. Officer, take away that goose, and produce the other.”

The other was on the front of the witness-box in a few seconds.

“Now, young woman, by what means do you propose identifying *this* goose?” inquired his Lordship.

“Why, my Lord,” said the girl, taking hold of one of the bird’s feet rather hastily, “why, my Lord, I am ——”

Before the last word had fairly escaped the lips of the damsel, the goose gave a violent flap with its wings, and raising a tremendous cackle

escaped out of the officer's hands, and dashed against his Lordship with a force which nearly upset his equilibrium, as it did entirely the gravity of every person in court. Not liking a seat on the bench, the goose next paid a hasty visit to the jury, and then flew through all parts of the court, scattering lawyers' briefs in all directions, and fluttering the spectators as Coriolanus did the Volscians, wherever it went. At last it fell down exhausted among the reporters, who at that time sat immediately under the jury.

The singular simplicity of some witnesses is amusing. They appear quite amazed at what they deem the impertinent curiosity of the counsel in asking them so many questions. Not long ago, a plain country-looking man, of great muscular energy, seemingly about thirty-five years of age, was subjected to a long examination. It was visible to all that he answered every successive question with increased reluctance. At last the counsel, trying to invalidate his testimony, asked him if he had ever been in prison.

“Vat’s that you said, Sur?” said he, evidently doubting the fidelity of his ears.

“Have you ever been in prison, Sir?” repeated the counsel.

“Have I ever been in prizzon?” echoed the witness, drawing back his head in amazement and indignation, “Vell, Sur, your assurance beats everything. If I only had you outside, Sur, I’d answer your ——— impertinent question.” As the indignant countryman uttered the latter sentence he shook his clenched fist in a significant manner in the face of the affrighted counsel, who was only two yards distant from him.

I have sometimes been amused with the contrast which the eventual communicativeness of witnesses affords to the reserve they show at the commencement of their examination by counsel. About eighteen months ago, one of the leading counsel was endeavouring to demolish the credibility of the testimony of a witness named Goldsmith, by extorting from him an admission of certain facts prejudicial to his own character.

For some time it was with great difficulty the counsel could elicit a single admission from the witness which was of any service to his client. The witness either evaded the question or found it convenient to repeat the *non-mi-ricordo* game.

“Ah, master* Goldsmith, I see you’re not willing to tell us anything about yourself, but I’ll bring it all out before I have done with you ; so you may just as well answer my questions at once.”

The witness shrugged up his shoulders, just as if he had been about to swallow some most nauseous medicine.

“Come, come, master Goldsmith,” resumed the counsel, “come, come, do tell us what you know about certain courts?”

“About certain courts?” answered the witness, hesitatingly, and looking up to the ceiling as if he had been trying to comprehend the counsel’s question.

“Aye, about certain courts,” repeated the

* The counsel to whom I allude is in the habit of calling all the witnesses hostile to his client by the prefix of “Master.”

counsel; “you know there is such a place as the Insolvent Debtors’ Court, and there is also this court, the Old Bailey, master Goldsmith.”

“O, I see very well what you’re driving at Mr.———,” said the witness, becoming quite reckless from a conviction of the impossibility of concealing anything—“I see, Sir, what you’re driving at. I have passed through the Insolvent Debtors’ Court three times. I have been four times in the Court of King’s Bench. I have been five times tried in this court on charges of assaults and swindling; on three of these occasions I was acquitted, and the other two found guilty. I was once sentenced to the tread-mill for three months, and another time to the House of Correction for six months. Now, Sir,” continued the witness, addressing himself to the counsel, “now Sir, there you have the whole of my character and the leading events of my life. I could not tell you more though you were to question me till this time to-morrow.”

“O, I don’t want anything more,” said the counsel, “that is sufficient; you may sit down, master Goldsmith.”

In the examination of policemen as witnesses, I have sometimes seen amusing scenes, chiefly arising from a peculiar way they have of speaking among themselves. Not long ago, one policeman who had assisted with several others in taking an Irishman of great muscular energy into custody, was asked by the judge “whether he made any attempt at resistance?”

“He did, my Lord.”

Judge—Do you mean to say that he was violent?

Witness—He was, my Lord.

Judge—Was he very violent?

Witness—He was werry wiolent.

Judge—What did he do? Did he strike any of you?

Witness—He did, my Lord.

Judge—Were the blows severe?

Witness—They were werry sewere.

Judge—Did he knock any of you down?

Witness—Yes, my Lord, he knocked down
175.

Judge (with great emphasis and with marked surprise)—He did what?

Witness—He knocked down 173.

Judge—Are you aware of what you are saying?

Witness—I am, my Lord.

Judge—And you mean to say on your solemn oath, that when the police constables went to take the prisoner at the bar into custody, he knocked down 175.

Witness—I do, my Lord.

Judge—Why, man, you must be out of your senses. The thing's impossible.

Witness—He *did* do it, my Lord.

Judge (throwing himself back in his seat)—I do not, Sir, know what to make of your testimony.

Witness—I've a-spoken nothink but the truth, my Lord.

Judge—What you state, Sir, is a perfect impossibility.

Witness—It's quite true, my Lord.

Judge—Hold your tongue, Sir, don't tell the court any more of such absurdities. Gentlemen, (turning himself to the jury-box,) you have heard

what this witness has stated, and which he still persists in : I am sure you will agree with me that no dependence is to be placed on his testimony.

The jury seemed to *look* the same opinion, though they said nothing. The counsel and all present were also equally at a loss how to reconcile such a fact with the solemn and oft-repeated declarations of the witness.

Judge (to the witness)—You still persist in saying, that the prisoner at the bar, when the police went to take him into custody, knocked down 175 ?

Witness—I do, my Lord.

Judge—And how long time may he have taken to perform this wonderful feat.

Witness—He did it in a few seconds, my Lord.

Judge (to the jury)—You see, gentlemen, it's of no use to proceed further with this witness. I am sure you must agree with me, that no reliance whatever is to be placed on anything he has stated this day.

The foreman of the jury here inquired of the judge whether he might ask the witness one or two questions.

“O certainly,” answered the judge.

Foreman of the Jury (to the witness)—You say that the prisoner knocked down 175 policemen. Will you be kind enough ———

“O no, Sir,” interrupted the witness, “O no, Sir, I did not say that.”

“Well, I appeal to the court,” said the jurymen, “whether that was not what you stated.”

“You certainly said so,” observed the judge, addressing himself to the witness.

“No, my Lord, I did not say that.”

“Why, do you mean to tell us that you did not swear that the prisoner knocked down 175 policemen?” said the judge, looking the witness sternly in the face.

“Certainly, my Lord: I only said that he knocked down 175.”

“Why, the man doesn’t appear to be in his senses. Why, gentlemen,” addressing himself

to the jury, "why, gentlemen, he has repeated the same thing just now."

"No, my Lord, certainly not. He only knocked down one," observed the witness.

"Only one! What then," said the judge, sternly, "what, then, did you mean by saying 175?"

"Why, what was the policeman's number, my Lord? He was 175 of the G division."

The bursts of laughter which followed this explanation were altogether deafening, in which the judge and the jury heartily joined.

But some amusing scenes are occasionally witnessed in the Old Bailey before the trials: I mean while the process of "swearing in the jury" is being gone through. One cannot help admiring the ingenuity which is displayed in assigning grounds for exemption from the duties of jurors. One of the most laughable affairs of this kind occurred a short time since. On the name of an Essex farmer being called, a plain blunt man stepped into the witness-box, and being duly sworn that he would speak

the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so far as it should be asked him, the judge accosted him with the usual question of—"Well, what is the ground on which you claim to be exempted?"

"I am a farmer, my Lord," was the answer.

"Well, but you do not mean to tell the court that you ought to be exempted because you are a farmer?"

The Essex man was silent.

"That is no reason at all why you should be exempted. Almost all our country jurors are farmers. Have you any other ground of exemption to state?" said the judge.

"Yes, my Lord."

"Well, let us hear it?"

"My services are required at home, my Lord."

"In what way and for what reason?" inquired his Lordship.

"Because there is a great deal of illness, my Lord."

"I am sorry to hear that; what may be the extent of the illness?" said the judge.

“Why, my Lord, there are no fewer than six all laid up at home.”

“That is a very extensive illness, indeed,” observed the judge.

“It is, indeed, my Lord,” said the other, with a deep sigh, and looking with a downcast air on the breast of the box.

“Are they *very* ill?” inquired his Lordship, who is a very humane man.

“They are, indeed, my Lord.”

“Not dangerously so, I hope?”

“I have reason to fear the worst, my Lord: I have, indeed.”

“There are no deaths, I hope,” said the judge, in a very sympathetic tone and with a very sympathetic expression of countenance.

“Yes, my Lord, there has been one,” said the other, looking most sorrowfully towards the floor.

“Pray how long ago is it since that calamity occurred?”

“Only last week, my Lord.”

“And you are apprehensive that others are dangerously ill?”

"I am, indeed, your Lordship," said the Essex man, with another deep sigh.

"This poor man is suffering great family affliction," whispered the judge to the alderman who was sitting beside him.

"It is one of the most melancholy cases I ever heard of," responded the city functionary.

"We must excuse this unfortunate man," added the judge.

"O most certainly," said the alderman.

"You are ex——; stay just for one moment," said the judge, before he had finished the sentence excusing the party—"Stay for one moment. Are there any at all at home in good health?"

"O no, my Lord," answered the other, giving a most touching shake of the head, "O no, they are *all* ill."

"Then, I suppose, your farming operations are at a complete stand-still?"

"They are, indeed, my Lord. Nothing has been done for the last eight days."

“Of course, you have a doctor attending them?”

“O yes, my Lord, the best horse-doctor in the country.”

“The best what?” said the judge, looking the farmer as significantly in the face as if at a loss to decide in his own mind whether the latter had really uttered the words, or whether his own ears had not deceived him.

“The best horse-doctor in the country, my Lord.”

“Why, the man is clearly out of his senses; his afflictions have deranged his mind;” observed the alderman to the judge, in a whisper.

“He certainly *talks* like an insane man; but he does not *look* like one,” answered the judge. “I will ask him another question or two. Are they,” turning to the farmer, “are they all confined to bed?”

“To bed, my Lord!” said the Essex farmer, with a look of infinite surprise.

“Yes, to bed; when they are so ill as you represent.”

“ O dear no, my Lord, none of them are in bed.”

“ Then they surely cannot be so ill as you say ?”

“ They are, indeed, your Lordship.”

“ You astonish me. Do they, then, rise and go to bed at the usual hours ?” inquired the judge.

“ Why, my Lord, they never go to bed at all,” answered the Essex man, evidently much surprised at the question of his Lordship.

“ Not to bed at all !” exclaimed the judge, looking the party with infinite amazement in the face.

“ Never, my Lord ; not one of them was ever in bed in their lives.”

“ I am afraid,” whispered the alderman into the ear of the judge, “ that what I before stated is too true ; the poor man’s afflictions have impaired his intellects.”

“ It certainly is very extraordinary,” observed his Lordship.

“ Attend, my man,” said the judge, evidently

resolved to clear up the mystery some way or other,—“Attend for one moment; are they, then, confined to the house?”

“To the house, my Lord!” answered the farmer, quite as much surprised as before,—“to the house! They were never in the house at all.”

“They are never what?” asked the judge, his astonishment waxing still greater and greater.

He looked the alderman in the face; on which the latter, with much self-complacency observed, “It’s just what I said: the poor man’s calamities have deranged his intellects.”

“Never in the house at all, my Lord.”

“O,” said his Lordship, as if a solution of the enigma had suddenly shot athwart his mind, “O, I see how it is, though you say they are at home, perhaps they are in the hospital.”

“In the hospital!” exclaimed the farmer, with great emphasis and amazement, “no, my Lord, none of them ever crossed an hospital door.”

“Then where are they; in the name of won-

der?" said the judge, with some haste, his surprise being now wound up to the highest pitch.

"Why, my Lord, they are all in the stable, to be sure," was the answer.

"They are where?" said the judge, rising partially from his seat in the greatness of his amazement, and looking the farmer hard in the face.

"In the stable, my Lord," repeated the Essex man.

The judge looked at the alderman, the alderman looked at the counsel at the table below, and the counsel and everybody else in the court looked at one another.

"Are you aware of what you are saying?" inquired his Lordship, with great seriousness.

"Perfectly so, my Lord."

"And you mean to say that your sick family are all in the stable?"

"My *family*, my Lord!" said the farmer, overwhelmed with amazement at the question; "no,

not my family, but my six horses, who are ill of the influenza.”*

It is impossible to describe the shouts of laughter with which the whole court were convulsed for full five minutes after the farmer gave this last answer.

Many amusing scenes used to occur during the Old Bailey proceedings, when the late Mr. Justice Buller presided. The remarks which he was in the habit of making while the cases were proceeding with naturally led to this.

Of these scenes, however, I do not mean to speak at length. I mention his name with the view of stating that it was a common practice of his to anticipate the question which counsel meant to put to the witnesses, and to let observations drop in the course of the trial which clearly showed that he knew what would be the result. It was observable, however, that he did this most frequently in those cases where a ver-

* This was some years ago, when a great many horses throughout the country were seriously ill of this disease.

dict of guilty was likely to be returned. Hence his name became proverbial among those of the lower orders in the habit of frequenting the Old Bailey proceedings, as "the judge vot condemned men before they were tried." This piece of information was communicated to himself one day, in the latter part of his life, under very amusing circumstances. Being in want of a horse, and intending to purchase one, he stepped on one occasion into a repository to see whether any one would suit him. He was at this time dressed in a blue coat, leather breeches, top-boots of a very antiquated make, and wore a three-cornered hat. His appearance was consequently so different from what it was when presiding at the Old Bailey, when he had on his wig and was muffled up in his robes of office, that even those in the habit of most frequently seeing him at the latter place, would have no chance of recognising him without an unusually close scrutiny of his features. On entering the place, he inquired of a horse-jockey he saw rubbing down a good-looking animal, whether he

had got any superior horses of a particular description.

“This is a prime un, Sir; I’ll be bound there’s ne’er a better in Lunnun,” said the jockey, meaning the animal he was rubbing down.

“I should like to see how he runs with a rider on his back,” said Mr. Justice Buller.

“That you shall do presently,” said the jockey, leaping on the horse’s back. “There’s not a better running animal than this ere ’os in the kingdom,” he continued, applying his heels, in the absence of spurs, to the sides of the beast.

“Stop, stop, my man,” exclaimed Mr. Justice Buller, before the horse had proceeded a dozen steps; “stop, stop, my man, that horse won’t do.”

“Von’t do!” said the jockey, stopping the horse and eying the justice with a most expressive glance from top to toe; “Von’t do! vy, I’ll be blowed, old chap, if you bean’t like Judge Buller, who condemns the poor coves* before he

* Prisoners.

tries them. Come, old boy, you'd better not try any more of this ere gammon again; if you do, I'm blessed if you don't catch it."

Mr. Justice Buller used to tell the story with great zest.

I have spoken, in a previous part of the chapter, of the indifference with which some of the more hardened of the criminals receive their sentences. I have repeatedly seen them ironically thank the judge for transportation, and tell him that they felt particularly obliged to him. On some occasions their remarks are exceedingly witty. Some years ago, an Irishman, on being sentenced to transportation for life, accosted the judge with, "Is there anything I can do for your honour in Botany, since it's myself would have plaisir in obleeing your honour in that same place?" "Remove him from the bar," said the judge to the officer. "Well, then, your honour," said Paddy, "I'll send you home a monkey to divert your honour, at any rate."

Another Irishman, on being sentenced to transportation for life across the seas, turned

back, after being removed a few paces from the bar, and looking the judge significantly in the face, said, "Will your honour allow me to spake one word?"

"Certainly," said the judge, thinking he was about to make confession of the crime of which he had been found guilty.

"Well, then, your honour, it's myself will be happy to carry out letters to any of your honour's friends in Botany Bay."

"Take him away," said the judge, addressing the officer."

"Throth, and that's the way in which your honour rewards my politeness, is it?" said Pat, on being dragged away by the collar from the dock.

In addition to the scenes which so often occur in the course of the examination of witnesses, there are occasionally some of an amusing nature, which take place from the loss of temper on the part of the counsel on the opposite sides. Such scenes, however, have not been so frequent of late years, as they used to be.

When Mr. A——, who died some years ago, was practising in the Old Bailey, he and another of the counsel almost invariably quarrelled when they happened to be on different sides. And their quarrels were not like the sham quarrels so common among lawyers. They were quarrels of the right sort, as one of the parties used to call them. Not content with fighting each other with their tongues, they had recourse to more solid weapons. Walking canes, umbrellas, books, or anything else of a substantial kind, that was nearest at the time, were put in requisition; and with these they used to belabour each other in open court. The most singular feature in the implacable enmity with which the gentlemen in question regarded each other, and the endless insults which passed between them, was, that neither ever sent a challenge to the other to fight a duel, though often advised to do so by their friends as the best way of settling their disputes. Each excused himself on the ground that there was something so disreputable and ungentlemanly in

the conduct of the other, that it would be lowering his own character to go out with him.

The counsel in the Old Bailey are occasionally very fond of trying their hands at puns. The best one I have heard perpetrated there for some time past owes its authorship to Mr. Charles Phillips. Not long since a prisoner was tried for unlawfully obtaining money by falsely representing himself as being an officer in some regiment of horse, the name of which I forget. After the case was finished, Mr. Common Sergeant Mirehouse, who presided on the occasion, said it consisted with his personal knowledge, that the prisoner was not an officer in the regiment in question; for that he himself had once had the honour of holding a commission in the same regiment. On this Mr. Charles Phillips remarked—"Although your Lordship has changed your position, it is clear that you have not been promoted; but that, on the contrary, you have been reduced from the rank of a captain to that of a "Common Sergeant." This pun, as Lord Brougham would

say, is by no means amiss; it told with excellent effect.

There is one eccentric character whom it were unpardonable to pass over in a chapter devoted to the Old Bailey: I allude to Mr. Curtis, who is as constantly to be seen in the New Court as the judge himself. Mr. Curtis is known to everybody in and about the place, and nobody can know him without being attached to him. A more honest, kind-hearted, or inoffensive creature, does not exist. For nearly a quarter of a century has he been in constant attendance at the Old Bailey, from the opening to the close of each session, never, so far as I am aware, being absent, with the exception of two occasions when attending the county assizes. He writes short-hand; and has, I understand, a stenographical work in the press, to be called "Short-hand made Shorter." He is so passionately fond of writing the trials, that he takes down, for his own special amusement, every case verbatim which comes before the New Court. What his horror of the Old Court

arises from, I have never been able to learn; but one might as soon expect to find the Bishop of London in a Dissenting chapel, as to find Mr. Curtis in the Old Court. He is celebrated for his early rising: four o'clock in the morning he considers a late hour. It is quite an era in his life to lie in bed till five. By seven, he has completed his morning journeys, which usually embrace a distance, including doubles—for he is particularly fond of going over the same ground twice, if not thrice, in a morning—of from six to eight miles. Among the places visited, Farringdon Market, Covent Garden Market, Hungerford Market, and Billingsgate, are never under any circumstances omitted. Farringdon Market has the honour of the first visit, because, as good luck (for it) would have it, he chanced to reside in that neighbourhood. His own notion is, that he has walked as much within the last thirty years, before seven in the morning, as would have made the circuit of the globe three or four times. He is, perhaps, the most inveterate pedestrian alive; locomotion seems to be

a necessity of his nature. It is the severest punishment that could be inflicted on him to be obliged to remain for any length of time in one place. There is only one exception to this rule; and that is, when he is taking down the trials at the Old Bailey. He regards it as the greatest favour that could be conferred on him, to be asked to walk ten or twelve miles by an acquaintance. He frequently inquires of his friends, whether they have occasion to go to any of the villages in the neighbourhood of London; adding, that in that case, he will be happy to take "a step" with them. He some time since kindly offered to give me a "full, true, and particular account" of the eventful vicissitudes of his life, if I would take a walk out to Hampstead, or any other village in the vicinity of London, with him. I would with infinite pleasure have accepted his offer, but that it chanced to be a very rainy evening. He is particularly partial to wet weather, and is as fond of a rainy day as if he were a duck. He is never so comfortable as when thoroughly

drenched. Thunder and lightning throw him into perfect ecstasies. Some years since, he luxuriated for some hours on Dover cliff, in one of the most tremendous thunder-storms ever witnessed in this country. A year or two ago, he walked down to Croydon and back again on the three consecutive days of the fair; making, with his locomotive achievements in Croydon, a distance of nearly fifty miles a day; and this without any other motive than that of gratifying his pedestrian propensities. He has a perfect horror of cabs, coaches, omnibuses, and all sorts of vehicles; nobody, I believe, ever saw him in one. Rather than submit to be wheeled through the streets in any vehicle whatever, he would a thousand times over encounter the fate of poor Falstaff when Madams Ford and Page, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," caused him to be pitched out of a clothes'-basket into the river Thames. I have my doubts, indeed, whether a submersion in the Thames, or in any other water, would be any punishment to Mr. Curtis at all; for, judging from his extreme partiality

to heavy showers of rain, it would look as if he were, to a certain extent, an amphibious being. This much is certain, for he has often told me the thing with infinite glee himself, that he was once thrown into a pond without suffering any inconvenience. The benefits of air and exercise are manifest in his cheerful disposition, and healthy-looking, though somewhat weather-beaten countenance. I have often told him that he is the happiest little thick-built man alive.

He possesses a singularly strong constitution. I have spoken of his early rising; I should have mentioned, in proof of the vigorousness of his frame, that he is also late in going to bed. On an average, he has not, for the last twenty years, slept above four hours in the twenty-four. He is often weeks without going to bed at all. It sufficeth him, as Wordsworth would say, to have two or three hours' doze in his arm-chair, and with his clothes on. In the year 1834, he was seized with the ambition of performing an unusual feat in this way. He aspired to the reputation of being able to sit up one hundred

consecutive nights and days, without stretching himself on a bed, or in any way putting himself into a horizontal position, even for one moment. He actually did, incredible as it may appear, accomplish the extraordinary undertaking. For one century of consecutive nights and days, as he himself loves to express it, Mr. Curtis neither put off his clothes to lie down in bed, or anywhere else, for a second. Any little sleep he had during the time, was in the shape of a doze, as just mentioned, in his arm-chair.

His taste for executions, and for the society of persons sentenced to death, is remarkable. He has been present at every execution in the metropolis and its immediate neighbourhood, for the last quarter of a century. This may appear so improbable a statement, that it may be proper to mention I have it from his own lips; and nothing in the world would induce him to state what is not true. Nay, so powerful is his propensity for witnessing executions, that, some years since, he actually walked down before breakfast to Chelmsford, which is twenty-nine

miles from London, to be present at the execution of Captain Moir. For a great many years past he has not only heard the condemned sermon preached in Newgate, but has spent many hours in their gloomy cells, with the leading men who have been executed in London during that time. He was a great favourite with poor Fauntleroy. Many an hour did Mr. Curtis spend in Newgate with that unfortunate man. He was with him a considerable part of the day previous to his execution. With Corder, too, of Red Barn notoriety, he contracted a warm friendship; sleeping, I think he has told me, repeatedly on the same bed as that unhappy man had been accustomed to sleep on. Immediately on the discovery of the murder of Maria Martin, he hastened down to the scene, and there remained till the execution of William Corder, making a period of several weeks. He afterwards wrote "Memoirs of Corder," which extended to upwards of three hundred pages. The work was published by the present Lord Mayor, then Mr. Kelly; and being published in sixpenny numbers, had

a large sale. Three portraits, all engraved on one piece of plate, embellished the work. They were portraits of William Corder, Maria Martin, and Mr. Curtis himself. I believe this is the only literary work of Mr. Curtis; he is proud of it: nothing pleases him better than to be called the biographer of Corder.

By some unaccountable sort of fatality, Mr. Curtis, where he is unknown, has always had the mortification of being mistaken, under very awkward circumstances, for other parties. He was never at Dover but once in his life, and on that occasion, he was locked up all night on suspicion of being a spy. When he went down to Chelmsford, to be present at the execution of the unfortunate captain, whose name I have already mentioned, he engaged a bed early in the morning the day before the execution, at the Three Cups Tavern. On returning to the inn in the evening, he saw everybody stare at him as hard as if he had been a giraffe. The female servants rushed out of his sight the moment they fixed their eyes on him. Among

the men-servants, in addition to the feeling of horror with which they clearly regarded him, he heard a variety of whispers, without being able to understand the why or wherefore. At last, the landlady of the Three Cups advanced a few steps towards him, though still keeping at a distance of some yards, and said in tremulous accents and with quivering frame,—“We cannot give you a bed here; when I promised you one, I did not know the house was so full as it is.”

“Ma’am,” said Mr. Curtis, indignantly, at the same time pulling himself up—“Ma’am, I have taken my bed, and I insist on having it.”

“I’m very sorry for it, but you cannot sleep here to-night.”

“I *will* sleep here to-night; I’ve engaged my bed, and refuse it me at your peril,” said Mr. Curtis, thrusting his right hand into the breast of his waistcoat, and assuming an aspect of offended dignity.

“It’s impossible, it’s impossible, it cannot

be," observed the landlady of the Three Cups, with great eagerness and emphasis.

"Why, madam? I should like to know the reason *why*?" taking off his glasses, and buttoning his coat.

"I'll pay the price of your bed in any other place, if you'll only go and sleep somewhere else," was the only answer of the relict of the late Mr. Boniface.

"No, ma'am," said Mr. Curtis, with an edifying energy, the brilliant indignation of his eye proclaiming with expressive eloquence, the spirit with which he resented the affront offered to him, "No, ma'am, I insist on my rights as a *public* man; I have a duty to perform to-morrow." As he spoke, he took three or four hasty paces through the room.

"It's all true. He says he's a public man, and that he has a duty to perform," were words which every person in the room exchanged in suppressed whispers with each other.

The waiter now stepped up to Mr. Curtis,

and taking him aside, said—"The reason why Missus won't give you no bed, is because you're the executioner;" and, as he uttered the words, he drew himself back from Mr. Curtis, as if the latter had been a walking cholera. Mr. Curtis was on the first announcement of the thing somewhat astounded; but in a few moments he laughed heartily at the mistake. "I'll soon convince you of your error, ma'am," said Mr. Curtis, walking out of the house. He returned in about ten minutes with a respectable gentleman of the place, with whom he was acquainted; and the gentleman having spoken to the fact of his identity being different from what had been supposed, the landlady made a thousand apologies for the mistake, and as the only reparation she could make him, she gave him the best bed in the Three Cups Tavern.

This was, in all conscience, a sufficiently awkward mistake; but it was nothing to one which was made on another occasion. I have already mentioned the zest with which he enjoyed the luxury of sleeping in Corder's bed. That,

however, was not enough; nor did it satisfy him to spend night after night with him in prison. He accompanied Corder to his trial, and stood up close beside him at the bar all the time the trial lasted. A limner had been sent from Ipswich to take a portrait of Corder, for one of the newspapers of that place. And what did he do? Nobody, I am sure, would guess. Why, the stupid animal, as Mr. Curtis justly calls him, actually took a sketch of Mr. Curtis himself, mistaking him for Corder; and in the next number of the provincial print, Mr. Curtis figured at full length as the murderer of Maria Martin! Mr. Curtis regards this as one of the most amusing incidents in his life; and I speak seriously when I say, that while expressing his anxiety that I would omit none of those adventures of his which I have here given, he was particularly solicitous that this incident should have a place. I promised I would attend to his wishes. I have kept my word.

I have glanced at Mr. Curtis's excellent moral character. He has often told me that he has

done everything in his power, though without effect, to induce the authorities of Newgate to write in legible letters above the door of every cell in that prison, the scriptural axiom—"The way of transgressors is hard." Here Mr. Curtis's judgment is at fault. It were of little use to tell the unhappy criminals, after they are shut up in their gloomy cells, that the way of transgressors is hard; they find that it is so in their bitter experience. If any way could be devised of convincing them of the fact when meditating the commission of a crime which would send them thither, there would be sound philosophy in the thing. In the case to which Mr. Curtis alludes, it were only an illustration of the old adage of "After death the doctor."

While thus referring to the excellent moral character of Mr. Curtis, I beg I may be understood as speaking with all sincerity when I say, that notwithstanding all his eccentricities, which, by the way, are of the most harmless kind,—he has done a great deal of good to prisoners sentenced to death. I speak within bounds when

I mention that he has, from first to last, spent more than a hundred nights with unhappy prisoners under sentence of death, conversing with them with all seriousness and with much intelligence, on the great concerns of that eternal world on whose brink they were standing. I saw a long and sensible letter which the unhappy man named Pegsworth, who was executed in March last for the crime of murder, addressed a few days before his death to Mr. Curtis, and in which he most earnestly thanked Mr. C. for all the religious instructions and admonitions he had given him, adding, that he believed he had derived great spiritual benefit from them.

There are some other characters of some eccentricity to be seen at the Old Bailey; but they are not worthy of a special notice.

Of the way in which the criminal justice of the country is administered at the Central Criminal Courts, which is now another name for the Old Bailey, there is not, nor can there be, two opinions. That is a point, therefore, on

which it would be unnecessary to make any observations; but I cannot close the chapter without paying the tribute of my special admiration to the Recorder of London—on whom devolves the most onerous duties as judge, at the Old Bailey—for the way in which he discharges the functions of his office. He presides during the greater part of the sessions in the Old Court, where, as before observed, the most important cases are tried. The Hon. Mr. Law has now filled the situation of Recorder for the city of London for about four years. He is son of the late, and brother of the present, Lord Ellenborough. He is well versed in the criminal jurisprudence of the country; and the soundness of his judgment is admitted by all. But these are not the qualities in the judicial character of Mr. Law, on which I would chiefly delight to dwell. The qualities to which I allude are chiefly of a moral kind. It has been my fortune to see a great many judges in Scotland as well as in England, presiding in courts of justice; but I have never seen one who seemed to me to be

more deeply or more permanently impressed with a sense of the serious responsibility of his situation, than the present Recorder of London. He unites in a rare degree the gravity of the judge with the mildness and manners of a gentleman. He is ever anxious to anticipate the wishes of the unfortunate parties at the bar; and to afford them every opportunity of doing everything which the law allows, to procure their acquittal. He listens most patiently to everything they have to say, at whatever sacrifice of his own time, and however great the amount of personal labour to himself. He does this even when his most decided impression is, that there is not the slightest chance of an acquittal. A more humane judge never sat in a court of justice: you see kindness in his looks; humanity shows itself in every word he utters. His leanings, wherever the case can admit of leaning, are always on mercy's side; and nothing could be more affecting than the way in which he passes sentence in all those cases in which the magnitude of the offence or the serious

criminality of the prisoner, has rendered it necessary that an example should be made to deter others from pursuing the same course of conduct. It is plain in all such cases that he is doing violence to his own feelings, in order that he may faithfully discharge his duty to his country. I have reason to believe that his admonitions to prisoners, in passing sentence, have more frequently been attended with beneficial effects to the unhappy individuals themselves, as well as to the spectators, than those of any other judge who has sat in any of our criminal courts, for a long series of years.

CHAPTER IV.

NEWGATE.

Origin of the name—Erection of the building—Description of the interior—Classification of the prisoners—The chapel—"Condemned Sermons."—General Remarks—State of a prisoner's mind the night before his execution—Preparations for an execution—Miscellaneous observations.

NEWGATE is situated close to the Old Bailey: it may be said, indeed, to form a part of the same building. There is an open space of about thirty yards square between them; but the two places are joined together by a strong high wall. Newgate, as everybody knows, is the great metropolitan prison for criminal offences. It is the largest prison in the country, perhaps in the world. I shall afterwards have occasion to

speak of its size in connexion with the number of prisoners that are sometimes confined in it at once. It is a large massy building. Its exterior has all the appearance of an indefinite durability. One would suppose that even Time himself, whom Lord Bacon personifies as the great innovator, could hardly make an impression on Newgate. It is supposed to have derived its name from the circumstance of a gate leading through the city walls having been put up in the thirteenth century,—which was called New Gate, to distinguish it from Lud Gate. It is generally believed by metropolitan antiquarians to have been the principal prison in London for upwards of five centuries past. The previous Newgate was destroyed by the great fire of 1666. The present building was commenced in 1776. Beckford, the well known patriot, and father of the celebrated author of “*Vathek*,” the builder of Fonthill Abbey, having been Lord Mayor at the time, was chosen by his fellow citizens to lay the foundation stone. What the expenses of the building were, I have not

been able to ascertain; but they must have been very great; for independently of what was contributed towards them by the corporation of London—to whose exertions in the matter the citizens owed the erection of the edifice—government made a grant of 50,000*l.* to assist in building the place. I shall, by-and-bye, have to speak of the existing state of the interior of Newgate. Before the erection of the present edifice, Newgate was so unhealthy a place as to prove fearfully destructive of human life. It was scarcely ever without some fatal disease, generated by the want of air, the putrid water the prisoners had to drink, their crowding together, and the utter disregard of cleanliness manifested by those who had charge of the apartments. There was then a well-known disease peculiar to the place called the gaol distemper. Of this disease, a popular writer of the middle of last century says, that the prisoners daily died by dozens, and that cart-loads of men were carried out and thrown into a pit in the churchyard of Christ Church. Thus the pestilence

not only often anticipated the work of the executioner on those who would have been doomed to expiate their crimes by their lives, but others, whose offences were of so venial a nature as not to expose them to capital punishment, were, in many cases, swept away within a few days of their crossing the precincts of the prison. And once dead, not the slightest decency was observed as to the disposal of their bodies. The same authority states that they were thrown into the earth as if they had been so many brute beasts. Nor was the gaol distemper, of which I have been speaking, confined to the inmates of the prison: it sometimes went beyond the walls. The effluvia which was emitted in hot weather was so great and offensive, that the inhabitants in the neighbourhood were constrained to memorialise the government on the subject. They, in many cases, caught the infection. On one occasion it penetrated into the sessions house, and produced the most frightful results. Two of the judges, the lord mayor, several of the jury, and various other persons, to the number

of sixty altogether, were seized by the disease, and suddenly carried off by it. It was its fatal consequences to others which first specially attracted the attention of the corporation of the city to the horrible state of the interior of Newgate, and led to those exertions on their part which ended in the erection of the present edifice,—thus affording another illustration of the scriptural maxim, that good is often brought out of evil.

The present building was scarcely finished, though occupied by several hundred prisoners at the time, when, in the riots of 1780, it was attacked by the mob, who liberated the prisoners and destroyed everything combustible in the place. The injury thus done to the building was repaired at the expense of parliament. The building was completed in 1782. In length, it measures three hundred feet, and the walls are fifty feet in height. At the time I write, the interior is undergoing great alterations. It has often done so before. What, therefore, is true of it as regards the arrangements, the classifica-

tion of the prisoners, &c., at one time, is not so at another. Under the existing arrangements the interior of the prison is divided into three stations.* The locality of the first of these is the north wing, or that part of the building nearest Smithfield market, which has three yards, with sleeping and day-rooms attached. The first yard and the rooms belonging to it are occupied by grown-up convicts under sentence of transportation; the second yard and rooms, are set apart for the boys, who have also a school-room; the third yard and rooms, are used as the infirmary and convalescent wards for the male prisoners. The second station is in the centre of the building, and has also three yards, with day and sleeping-rooms attached. The first of these yards and rooms are occupied by persons under sentence of imprisonment for misdemeanors and felonies; and the other two yards and rooms are tenanted by those male

*I am here assuming, that the same arrangements in this respect will be continued after the present alterations have been completed.

prisoners who have not yet been tried. The press yard, with the attached cells for the reception of criminals condemned to death—of which cells I shall afterwards have to speak—are also locally connected with this part of Newgate. The remaining or third station forms the south wing, or that part of the building which is nearest to Ludgate Hill. There all the female prisoners are confined. They have two yards allotted them, each of which has sleeping wards and day-rooms attached. One of the two yards is occupied by females who are awaiting their trials. Connected with this department of Newgate, there is a school for girls. The upper story of this yard is used as an infirmary for females. The second yard and attached apartments are reserved for females under sentence of transportation for felonies and misdemeanors.

The number of night-rooms in Newgate is thirty-three. The number of inmates in them, after dark, varies from fifteen to thirty. The number of day-rooms or wards is only ten; so

that when the prison is full, there will sometimes be upwards of forty persons in each. The principal wards and rooms in the several stations of the prison are each about thirty-eight feet in length, and fifteen wide; the smaller ones measure twenty-four by fifteen feet.

The most painfully interesting part of Newgate to a stranger who visits it, is that in which the places, technically called the condemned cells, are situated. These cells are appropriated for the reception of those who are under sentence of death. Of these cells there are three tiers, and in each tier there are five cells, making the entire number of these gloomy abodes fifteen.

They are situated on the north side of the prison, and adjoining the house of the Ordinary, abutting Newgate-street. When a prisoner is convicted of a capital offence he is removed to this part of Newgate, there to remain until the Recorder has made his report to his Majesty. In case of a commutation of sentence, the prisoners are transferred to the transport-yard, pre-

paratory to their removal to the hulks. Those, on the other hand, against whom the fatal sentence is to be carried into execution, are suffered to remain until that moment arrives. In the day-time the prisoners are allowed to congregate together in a large apartment called the day-room; but at night each is shut up in his own cell. The condemned cells are all situated on the first and second floors. Connected, as already stated, with these cells, are two large rooms called day-rooms; one on the ground floor opening into the press-yard, and the other immediately above it. The lower is used by capital convicts; while the upper room is reserved for devotional and sacramental purposes. The condemned cells measure nine feet by seven feet; each of them has a small window guarded with iron stanchions. The windows have severally a sliding shutter to admit light and air, should the prisoner wish it. They are near the ceiling, but do not show more light than is barely sufficient to enable the prisoner to read or write. The great majority of the unhappy inmates are

without education, and of uncultivated habits. They have no means of profitably employing their leisure hours, and consequently chiefly spend their time in the use of the coarsest possible language, and in condemning the laws which have condemned them. There are, however, to this as to every other rule, some exceptions. The walls of each cell being white-washed every two years, and the prisoners being allowed the use of pencils, some of them give expression to their feelings and sentiments in their peculiar situation, by writing them on the walls. Any person who is permitted to visit Newgate may learn, from the inscriptions on the walls, many interesting facts illustrative of the various phases which human nature assumes. While some of these inscriptions are of a character which show the utter depravity of the parties writing them, there are others which indicate the deepest penitence. Texts of scripture and passages from hymns, are among the modes of expressing their feelings and sentiments most frequently used by the latter class

of prisoners. In some few instances, however, where the parties have a taste for poetry, they give utterance to their views in lines indited by themselves. The following lines were written about twenty years since by a young man then under sentence of death for forgery:—

“Thou hapless wretch! whom justice calls
To dwell within these dreary walls.
Know, guilty man, this very cell
May be to thee the porch to hell!
Thy sins confessed—thy guilt forgiven—
Mysterious change!—it leads to Heaven!”

These lines were written under very peculiar and affecting circumstances. The unhappy man was only twenty-two years of age at the time. He was a gentleman both by education and manners. The offence for which he was convicted, and eventually executed, was that of having committed a forgery on the Gravesend bank, to the extent of 74*l*. He had been induced to do this solely from an anxiety to learn the Hebrew language, for which he had a great aptitude. As soon as he got the money he re-

paired to a monastery in the South of France, and entered himself as a student there, under one of the professors celebrated for his knowledge of the Hebrew language. His retreat being discovered, he was brought back to England, tried, and convicted. He had spent but little of the money when he was apprehended; but notwithstanding this fact, in conjunction with his most amiable disposition and exemplary morals, such was the sanguinary character of our criminal jurisprudence at that period, that he was doomed to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. I may mention as an extraordinary proof of the singularly excellent character of this young man, whose name I forbear to mention, lest some of his relatives may still survive, that hearing his friends were making great exertions to procure a commutation of his sentence, he strenuously resisted it on the ground that as another young man had been executed a few days previously for precisely the same offence, there would be an injustice in allowing him to escape. His fate excited the deepest regret in

the minds of all who were acquainted with the circumstances ; and the inhabitants of Gravesend, where he had lived for many years, erected a handsome monument to his memory.

Formerly the practice in Newgate, on the night previous to the execution of prisoners, was to shut them up in cells on the ground floor. From these they proceeded along a dark narrow passage to the place of execution. Anything more gloomy than those cells it were impossible to imagine. They have all the appearance of subterraneous holes. They are now used as places of lumber. The Rev. Dr. Dodd was shut up in one of these cells the night before his execution. I could not look into his cell without the most painful feelings.

One very interesting part of Newgate is the chapel in which divine service is performed in the presence of the prisoners. When what is termed a "condemned sermon" is to be preached in it—that is to say, a sermon previous to an execution—the chapel becomes a place of peculiar interest both to the prisoners, and to many

persons from without.* On such occasions there is always a crowd of persons at the felons' door, waiting to obtain admission when the service is about to commence. Though the chapel is only capable of accommodating 400 persons with comfort, 700 or 800 will sometimes be wedged into it when a condemned sermon is to be preached. People are attracted by two things on such occasions. The one is a desire to hear a sermon under such circumstances, and the other is a curiosity to see the poor unhappy creature about to be hurried into the presence of his Creator. There is a gallery in the chapel which is appropriated to strangers on such occasions. Another gallery is set apart for the female prisoners, who are shut out from the view of the male prisoners by a curtain. In the body of the chapel are the male prisoners. The "condemned pew," or the pew which is appropriated to the unfortunate man whose days are

* Formerly admission was to be obtained to the chapel to hear a condemned sermon preached, on paying half-a-crown ; but no admission money is now received.

numbered, is in the centre. It is black all over, which only serves to heighten, by contrast, the unearthly paleness of the miserable occupant. The pulpit and reading-desk are hung with black, and the whole appearance of the place, conjoined with the associations which arise in one's mind, produces the deepest solemnity of feeling. No man could remain any time in it without feeling his mind overwhelmed with an undefinable melancholy, even on those occasions when no "condemned sermon" is to be preached. What then must be one's emotions when he sees before him a fellow-creature within a few hours of being ushered into the presence of the Divine Being, and hears a sermon which has an almost exclusive reference to the culprit's situation?

I am not sure whether, after all, these "condemned sermons" are judicious. The miserable parties to whose circumstances they are intended to apply, are not in a condition, in one case out of a hundred perhaps, to profit by them. Any one who reflects for a moment on

the situation of such persons, must at once come to this conclusion. But the matter is not one of mere inference. Every person who has been present while these sermons were being delivered, must have seen in the appearance of the parties, that they were insensible to what was going on. With very few exceptions, indeed, they cannot walk into the pew set apart for them without support, and when they are in it, it is with difficulty they can retain a sitting position. Their tottering frames, their wild and vacant look, and indeed their aspect altogether, force the conviction on every spectator's mind, that they are incapable of attending to the sermon. The sound of the preacher's voice rings in the ear of the wretched beings for whom the discourse is specially intended, but his words have no meaning in them. But even supposing there was nothing, in the fact of their trembling on the very verge of eternity, to unfit them for paying the requisite attention to the solemn admonitions of the preacher, the circumstance of their being constantly stared at

by the strangers, and the other prisoners, would of itself be sufficient to discompose them. Would it not be much better to allow them to remain in their cells while service is being performed in the presence of the other prisoners, and then, on its close, to let the Ordinary speak to them in private? Their minds, in such circumstances, would be much more susceptible of devout impressions.

I have often thought, when reflecting on the subject of "condemned sermons," that at the very time such sermons are being preached before one or more unhappy creatures doomed to death, there are, it may be, hundreds of others throughout the Christian world who are also hearing *their* last sermon, though unconscious of it. The thought is one which is well fitted to awaken in the mind a train of serious reflections; but it would be out of place in a work of this nature to indulge in it.

In the chapel in Newgate, divine service is performed in precisely the same way as in any of the established churches in the metropolis.

There is a clerk, a communion altar, an organ, &c., for the due performance of the ritual of the church. The Rev. Ordinary being himself a rigid churchman, is strictly observant of all the formularies which the church enjoins on those in her communion. In reading the liturgy, his fine sonorous voice—now, owing to advanced years, it is not so effective—was formerly the admiration of all who heard it. Its varied and powerful intonations, conjoined with the solemnity of the speaker's aspect, and the affecting associations connected with the place, were strikingly calculated to produce a deep impression on the minds of all present. Even now, there are few clergymen in the church who can read the service with greater effect.

The condition of Newgate as regards its moral relations, is still far from being what it ought to be; but a very marked improvement has taken place in this respect within the last twenty years. Before that time it was a perfect hot-bed of all descriptions of crime. It were impossible to form an idea of the amount of in-

jury which it has, from first to last, done to its inmates. Boys and girls of tender ages were formerly committed to Newgate for offences of the most trifling nature. They were, with very few exceptions, committed for the first offence, the police magistrates making no distinction between the mere tyro in crime, and the most confirmed criminal. The youthful creature who, it may have been, stole a pennyworth of bread to administer to the cravings of hunger, and who knew not even in thought what crime, in strict propriety of speech meant, was doomed to mingle in Newgate with the most depraved and hardened offenders in the metropolis. Evil communications have, under any circumstances, a tendency to corrupt good manners. In Newgate the destruction of all moral feeling on the part of those who entered it with any, was an almost inevitable result. What else could be expected where a simple unsuspecting youth was doomed to associate with some of the worst characters in London? Escape from the contagion of such evil example

as was there hourly set them, from the moment they crossed the threshold of the place, could be little short of miraculous. The worst language was constantly heard, and the person who refused to take part in the shocking conversations of the vilest of the inmates, was persecuted beyond endurance. The leaders in crime were constantly talking of their great exploits that way; and as they were a sort of heroes in the eyes of the majority, those who entered Newgate comparatively innocent, came out fired by an ambition, as they considered it, of imitating the achievements of the worst of the inmates. There, too, the mere novice was, in a few days, instructed in the ways of crime much more perfectly, than he would have been by years of study and practice out of doors. The cases were consequently innumerable in which youths who went into Newgate without anything like a propensity to the commission of crime,—with, indeed, an entire horror of it, altogether irrespective of its penal consequences,—came out with their minds so depraved as to fit them

for undertaking the most daring enterprises, and committing the most fearful atrocities. Thus Newgate actually promoted objects the very reverse of those it professed to have in view. Instead of repressing crime, it proved a most fertile nursery of it in its worst forms. Mrs. Fry, of whose labours in Newgate I shall have to speak presently, in her evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in 1818, has one short passage which of itself speaks volumes as to the state of morals in Newgate previous to the time I have mentioned. "Women," she says, "who came in weeping over their deviations—some small deviations perhaps—by the time of their trial or dismissal would sometimes become so barefaced and wicked as to laugh at the very same things, and to be fitted for almost any crime. I understand that before we went into the prison it was considered a reproach to be a modest woman."

The same excellent lady says in another part of her evidence, which was limited to the female side of the prison, that there she witnessed the

most dreadful proceedings. There were begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, and dancing, and scenes too revolting to be described. Matters, it is unnecessary to say, were still worse on the male side of the prison. It was when such was the moral condition of Newgate, that Mrs. Fry, who is an honour alike to her species and her country, first began her philanthropic labours in it. The reformation which she has effected is incalculably great. The amount of good she has, from first to last, accomplished by her benevolent exertions within the walls of Newgate, will never be known in this world. Her's was a quiet, unobtrusive philanthropy. In her labours of mercy she shrunk from the public gaze. How many hours of her life she has spent amidst the physically and morally repulsive scenes of the interior of Newgate, is not known to the public. But I may mention, having had it from the lips of one of her most intimate friends, that for many years a large portion of her time was spent within the walls of that prison. Her's, indeed, was philanthropy

worthy of the name. It was a philanthropy based, as all true philanthropy must be, on the religion of Him who ever went, about doing good. And her labours of love were as judicious as they were laudable. She first established a school for the instruction of the children of the convicts, and then she undertook the care of the female convicts themselves. What an amount of moral courage, self-denial, and patient endurance, must have been necessary for the accomplishment of such objects as this excellent woman contemplated !

But though, by the indefatigable and zealous labours of Mrs. Fry, assisted by other benevolent ladies whom she organised into a committee, an incalculable amount of good has been done in Newgate, there is still room for great improvement. It will never be made what it is intended to be—a place for the correction of offenders and the repression of crime, so long as the system of allowing the prisoners to associate together is continued. They will necessarily corrupt one another, and employ their time in

forming new schemes for the commission of crime, as soon as they have regained their liberty. That they deem imprisonment in Newgate no great punishment, if, indeed, it be any punishment at all, is proved by the fact of so many of them being returned within a few months of their liberation. There are many instances on record of criminals spending full one-half of their time in Newgate, until, as they themselves say, a new leaf is turned over by their being transported beyond seas. Not many years ago, a youth under twenty, was found in Newgate for the thirteenth time. The separation of the prisoners from one another; in other words, solitary confinement, is the only thing which will ever invest Newgate, or any other gaol, with sufficient terror to a criminal's mind, to deter him from the commission of crime. The solitary system has been tried in other places, and found most effectual. I am glad to understand that it is in contemplation to resort to it in London. I am satisfied it will be followed here, as in

other places, by a very great and permanent diminution of crime.

In Newgate, there is a stated clergyman called the Ordinary,* for administering to the spiritual wants of the prisoners. Divine service is performed every sabbath-day in the chapel belonging to the place: the prisoners are all obliged to be present. The Ordinary whose heart is in the work of endeavouring to convert sinners, will always find scope enough in the interior of Newgate for his most indefatigable exertions. The inmates are of necessity precisely that class of persons who, of all others, stand most in need of spiritual instruction and spiritual admonition. But the most solemn and affecting part of the Ordinary's duty is, to administer to the exigencies of those on whom the sentence of death is about to be executed. This is not only a duty of an awfully solemn nature, but it is one which, for its due perform-

* The Rev. Mr. Cotton is now, and has been for many years, the Ordinary of Newgate.

ance, pre-eminently requires a sound judgment as well as warm Christian affection. It is one, in the performance of which the Ordinary is usually assisted by one or more ministers of various denominations, or by some private individuals whose breasts burn with Christian compassion for the souls of the unhappy persons who are about to be ushered into the presence of their Maker. There lives not the man who can more cordially venerate than I do, those philanthropic individuals who spend so much of their time in endeavouring to enlighten the minds of those in Newgate who are standing on the verge of eternity, in matters of a spiritual kind. But I am afraid that their good offices are sometimes deficient in Christian prudence. I confess it has always appeared to me a matter which ought to be one of deep concern to Christians, that almost all the culprits who are executed, mount the scaffold with the most entire persuasion, that all is safe as regards their future destinies. In most cases they have had only a few conversations with their spiritual advisers, before

they seem to be as much satisfied that their absence from the earth will be their presence in heaven, as that they are about to close their connexion with all things below for ever. This is a matter of such general occurrence, that it has become a daily remark, that if a man wishes to make sure of the way to heaven he has only to go by the gallows. I am aware that the abuse of a thing is no argument against the thing itself; and that though some men were on this account to think lightly of the commission of crimes against society, that would be no reason for not communicating spiritual instruction, and administering, within proper limits, spiritual consolation, to persons condemned to death. But I much fear that when the cases are so numerous in which men who have been guilty of the grossest crimes, both against the Deity and their fellow-men, thus ascend the scaffold with so entire a confidence in a happy hereafter, there must be something injudicious in the way in which the duties of a spiritual monitor are discharged. I am not

without my apprehensions that men make their exit out of the world, at the Old Bailey, with the most entire persuasion that all is well, whose minds have not been sufficiently enlightened on the great matters which pertain to their souls and eternity, and whose hearts have not undergone that change which the scriptures declare to be essential to salvation. To me it would be much more satisfactory if, in the majority of cases, I saw the unfortunate individuals who are doomed to die on the scaffold, look forward to their appearance before the great white throne, with fear and trembling. For sinners of the greatest magnitude, as such individuals usually are, this, in my view of the matter, would be, in most cases, a more becoming frame of mind, than the entire confidence and perfect composure which are so common. Death-bed repentances are proverbially doubtful; and I much fear that there are many of those who mount the scaffold without the dread of a hereafter, who would, were their sentences to be reversed and themselves

again turned loose on society,—be found to be essentially the same persons they were before. I am much afraid, in other words, that their confidence is in many cases a false confidence, generated by the grievously mistaken, but best-intentioned representations of those who have conversed with them on spiritual matters. I fear that the mercy of the Almighty is sometimes dwelt upon to the almost entire exclusion of sin's sinfulness, the magnitude of the party's guilt, and of the necessity of heartfelt contrition and brokenness of spirit to everlasting happiness. That is not true Christian charity which would, in such a case, gloss over the culprit's sins against his Maker, or only dwell on them in general terms. Enlightened Christian benevolence would, while pressing on the criminal's attention the glorious truth that there is salvation for the very chief of sinners, seek to impress his mind with a deep sense of the enormity of his own guilt. I know of no spectacle in the world of a more awfully affecting character, than that of a person about

to be ushered into the presence of his Maker, with the most entire persuasion that all is well, while he has never had a single overwhelming conviction of sin. That of the man who leaves the world without any thought at all about his future destiny, is, undoubtedly, affecting enough ; but it is not to be compared with the case which I have just supposed. I fear that those who are on the eve of being executed at the Old Bailey, have, in many cases, the language of “ Peace, peace ” whispered in their ears, before their minds have been sufficiently impressed with a sense of their spiritual danger. This is a mistaken leniency. Surely if there be a case in which faithfulness is required, it is in that of a criminal of no ordinary magnitude, about to be ushered into the eternal world. Let those whose Christian philanthropy prompts them to converse with persons sentenced to death, point out to them the all-sufficiency of the finished work of Emmanuel for sinners of the deepest dye ; but let them guard against anything which would have tendency to inspire a false confidence in the mercy of the Almighty,

If I understand the theology of revelation aright, it may be laid down as a general principle, that where there are not convictions of sin, and brokenness of spirit on account of it, there can be no salvation. I know that there may be different degrees as regards the force of these convictions and the depth of the contrition; but those, to say the least of it, are doubtful cases, especially at the Old Bailey, where these feelings are not sufficiently marked to strike the mind of one who converses with the doomed culprit on spiritual matters. I am sure it can hardly be necessary to say, that in these observations I have no particular persons nor particular cases in my eye. They have been dictated solely by the painful apprehension which has arisen in my own mind, from what I read and hear of persons expiring on the scaffold, whether at the Old Bailey or elsewhere, that the calmness with which such persons die is in many cases the consequence of a false confidence arising from ignorance of the magnitude of their own guilt, and the awful enormity of sin.

Perhaps there are few more affecting things in the world than to spend with a man sentenced to death, the last night of his existence. I have heard from the lips of one who has spent many such nights with unhappy men in Newgate, statements as to their feelings and conduct of the most deeply touching kind. Occasionally culprits are to be found who remain hardened to the last. They have lived in the disbelief of a future state of rewards and punishments; and they cling to their wretched infidelity to the last. There are others, who as they have lived in utter recklessness of everything religious, never having bestowed a thought as to whether Christianity be true or not, so in that state of awful recklessness they die. But instances of either kind are exceedingly rare. The atheist or deist has his mental perceptions on religious subjects greatly improved, when the immediate prospect of another world is before him. The evidences in favour of Christianity which he formerly laughed to scorn, as no evidences at all, now commend themselves to his mind with all the force of an

irresistible conviction; and he dares no more doubt the truth of that religion, than he dare doubt the fact that his days are numbered, and that he is standing on the very brink of eternity. The man who had been as thoughtless before about a future state and his own probable destiny, as the brutes that perish, is now the subject of an overwhelming anxiety. Let any one stretch his imagination to the utmost, and try to picture to himself what must be the state of mind of such persons the night previous to their execution. However vivid may be one's imagination, it will fall infinitely short of the fearful reality. Perhaps the history of mankind affords no example of the human mind being in a condition so solemn and appalling. The wretched party knows that he has but a few hours to live. Conscience summons up from the depths of the past, all the transgressions of the greatest magnitude he has committed, whether against his Maker or his fellow-men. To the latter he can now make no atonement; and even though he may cherish the hope that his guilt is expiated

in the sight of Him into whose presence he is about to be ushered, yet this hope will not prevent his feeling, in all their acuteness, the agonies of remorse. The mind is, as it were, torn by the conflicting claims of the two worlds; by the claims of that he is about to leave, and those of the world into which he is on the eve of being hurried. He has relatives and friends: it may be he has parents alive, or that he has a wife and children. How must the thought of parting for ever from them, coupled with that of the circumstances under which he is about to close his life, agitate his bosom! Never to see them more in time, were of itself under any circumstances an awfully affecting consideration; but to reflect that he bequeaths to them the disgrace of dying by the hands of the public executioner, and that they can never recur to his memory without the most painful feelings,—are thoughts that give a terrible additional poignancy to his mental distress. Then there is the thought of suffering an ignominious death next day in the presence of thousands. That is a thought which

constantly haunts his mind and harasses it beyond all conception. Contemporaneous with such reflections are his thoughts about the world he is about to enter. Where the unhappy man has no hope, what must be his state of mind in the immediate prospect of eternity ! I will not dwell on such a topic : it is indescribably terrible. Even where he has hope, there will be an overwhelming awe on his mind, at the thought of being in a few hours before the tribunal of his Judge. With a mind so exercised, is it to be wondered at that the last night of one's existence in Newgate should be spent in a state of frenzy ? His brain reels ; his lips are compressed ; his tongue is parched with a burning thirst ; in his eye there is a vacant, unearthly expression ; his complexion has a spectral appearance ; he is incapable of remaining for any time in one position, or in one place ; his hair stands on end ; a cold perspiration bathes his face ; the clamminess of death is already on his skin ; his whole appearance and demeanour show that his bosom is the seat of the most tumultuous emotions.

The gloomy aspect of his cell is in striking accordance with the sadness of his soul. The little glimmering light allowed him, only serves to let him see the horrors of his situation. He feels himself already as effectually shut out from the world as if he were no longer in it. The silence which reigns around him is awful. He might almost hear the falling of a pin. His own hurried breathing alarms him. He starts at the sound of every movement he makes. His very shadow frightens him. The bell of St. Paul's strikes the hour; his breast palpitates at the sound, as if it were a summons to him to appear that instant in the presence of his Maker. The deep and solemn tones of the bell, made more solemn by the awfulness of his situation, remind him with a terrible reality that he has but a few hours to live. When he can so far compose himself, he turns to his bible; that book which perhaps he has not opened for a long series of years. The recollection of his youthful days when, at school or at home, he had used at stated intervals to read certain portions of the inspired vo-

lume, rushes on his mind, and he bitterly reproaches himself for having disregarded its heavenly precepts. He muses on these touching topics for a little, and then kneels down on his cold floor to implore the Divine mercy. The picture is altogether frightful to contemplate : it is no imaginary one : it rather falls immeasurably short of the reality.

It is true that as there are exceptions to every rule, so there are to this. As before stated, some men remain hardened to the last ; doing violence equally to the laws of friendship and the claims of religion. The very brutes themselves, could they be made sensible of their approaching death, would betray more feeling than do some of those unhappy men who are doomed by the laws of their country to suffer by the hands of the public executioner. It may be in the recollection of some that when Thistlewood and the other Cato Street conspirators were executed in 1819, for high treason, some of them into only conducted themselves with a brute insensibility to their situation, the night before their deaths, but that

when on the scaffold, and within a few moments of being in the presence of their Maker, they made wry faces at the spectators with a view of making them laugh, and played the buffoon until the cord encircled their necks.

And I have heard of others who, with nothing of the spirit of bravado in them, as in this case, have felt and acted up to the last moment of their existence, as if on the morning of their execution they were only going to attend their usual avocations. This was not, with the persons to whom I refer, the effect of any mis-called philosophical notion: it arose from an easiness of mind which not even the immediate prospect of death itself could affect. One who was an eye-witness of the fact has informed me, that on a young man being brought out for execution, a good many years ago, at Newgate, he discovered on his way to the scaffold, that one of the laces of his half-boots was loose, and having got the permission of the officers, he bestowed nearly a minute in adjusting it. In the course of doing so, he found that he had missed one of the

holes of the boot through which he should have put the cord, on which he immediately undid the whole and put the string quite right. The young man had always been remarkable for his attention to "tidiness," as he called it. The least disarrangement of any part of his dress, though that dress, from his circumstances in life, was always homely enough, made him quite unhappy; it seemed to be the only thing which ever disturbed the equanimity of his mind. What a singular illustration this circumstance affords, of the ruling passion being strong in death !

The execution of a human being at any place, and under any circumstances, is an occurrence of an awfully interesting kind. One at the Old Bailey possesses, from a variety of adventitious circumstances which I need not mention, a peculiarly fearful interest. The first preliminary step towards it is that of reading, in the hearing of the convicts, the sermon which the Rev. Dr. Dodd preached to his fellow-prisoners immediately before he himself was offered up a sa-

crifice to the Moloch of a sanguinary criminal jurisprudence. This and other devotional services suited to the awful occasion, being over, the condemned party is shut up in the cell for the night. If he can so far compose his mind, under the melancholy circumstances in which he is placed, as to close his eyes in sleep, he is sure to be awakened at between four and five o'clock in the morning, by the sound of the horses' feet and the wheels of the vehicle, which drag forth from the court-yard the apparatus for his execution. And what an awakening must that be ! Poets talk of the sound of the death-knell ; what are their images to this ? To awake, it may be from a pleasant dream of a long and happy life—and there are abundant instances of the kind—and to find, that his first conscious impression is, that the sounds which have disturbed his slumbers, are sounds which denote the immediate proximity of an ignominious death,—is surely one of the most terrible situations in which a human being can be placed ! The very transition, in the supposed case, from

visions of a joyful nature to a sense of the party's impending doom, can only serve to heighten the awfulness of that doom. The "heavy noise" caused by the clattering of the horses' hoofs, and the rattling of the wheels of the ponderous vehicle, employed to carry out to the front of the building the materials out of which the gallows is to be erected,—is regarded by the turnkeys and other officers of the place, as the signal for their rising from their beds and performing the functions which severally belong to them, in the affecting spectacle about to be exhibited. Before six, all is bustle and activity in and about the prison. About that hour, Mr. Baker, a pious dissenter, repairs to the cell of the prisoner about to suffer, and admonishes him of a fact with which he is already but too well acquainted, namely, that he has but an hour or two to live. Mr. Baker then endeavours to take advantage of the awful circumstances in which the unhappy man is placed, to impress his mind with the great truths of religion, and to urge him to improve the few mo-

ments that remain to him of life, in making up his peace, through faith in the atoning blood of a Saviour, with the Being before whose tribunal he is about to appear. Mr. Baker not only admonishes, but prays with and for the unhappy man. Prayer is, or at least it ought to be, at any time, a solemn exercise; but what must be the solemnity which pervades a true Christian's mind, when he is interceding at a throne of grace for an immortal spirit which he knows will have a sentence of everlasting happiness or endless misery passed upon it before two hours have elapsed! The Rev. Dr. Cotton, the Ordinary of the prison, arrives before seven, to administer the sacrament of the supper to the unhappy man, should he be disposed to receive it. Then come the Sheriffs and Under-sheriffs, accompanied by some of their friends who may be desirous of witnessing an execution. A few minutes before the time appointed for bringing the unhappy party on the scaffold, all those who have been admitted into the interior of Newgate are conducted to a part of the prison called the

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press-room, where Mr. Cope desires them to remain and make as little noise as possible until the prisoner comes in, which is usually four or five minutes afterwards. That is a time of deep and awful interest, even to those who are only to be witnesses of the dreadful drama about to be enacted. Often have the hearts of persons of the greatest nerve been known to quail, and their limbs to quiver, while spending these few minutes in such circumstances. There is something in the deep gloom of the room, together with the massy ponderous appearance of the walls of the prison, which are seen out of the window, which accords with the sadness of soul caused by the contemplation of the scene which is on the eve of being exhibited. The prisoner is brought into the press-room, and on being led up to a table in the centre, undergoes the process of pinioning. This is not done, as is generally supposed, by the executioner. It is the duty always of the Sheriffs' officers, who are in this case the assistants to the executioner, to pinion the hands of the culprit. Perhaps it were

impossible to conceive a more solemn or affecting spectacle than that of the procession into the press-room, previous to the prisoner's undergoing the preparations for his execution. The Sheriffs and Under-sheriffs carrying their staves first enter the apartment. The Rev. Ordinary, whose appearance is remarkably venerable, follows; and last of all comes the unhappy being himself. The preliminary arrangements in the press-room for the execution seldom occupy more than two or three minutes. The whole of those present then form themselves into regular order, and move in due procession through the dark passages of the prison towards the gallows.

There is something solemn and impressive in the appearance of a funeral procession: how much deeper must be the impressiveness, and greater the solemnity, of such a procession as this! There is one who acts a part in it who in a few minutes will cease to exist. His connexion with the world is on the eve of closing for ever, and that, too, under circumstances of the most awful kind. The Rev. Ordinary reminds

the unhappy man of the fact, by reading aloud the burial service of the church. Contemporaneously with the first step the procession takes, the Rev. Gentleman pronounces in distinct and sonorous tones—"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," &c. Perhaps there are not more expressive passages in the Scriptures, than those which the church has selected as part of her burial service. They have a solemnising effect when delivered with feeling and propriety over the grave of a departed fellow-being.* How much more solemn must that service be when said over a living being just on the threshold of eternity! The Rev. Ordinary continues pronouncing the service of the church until the Sheriffs, the Under-sheriffs, himself, and

* Let me not be understood from this as approving of the funeral service of the church. I regard it as a thing which is altogether unwarranted in Scripture to represent Jesus as the resurrection and the life of all who die, indiscriminately.

the prisoner, reach the scaffold, when the voice of the Rev. Gentleman is drowned amidst the noise caused by the assembled thousands of spectators. The prisoner then ascends the steps which lead to the eminence called the drop, whence he is to be plunged into the ocean of eternity. The executioner, who before this time has nothing to do with the wretched individual, now takes charge of him, and proceeds to complete the remaining arrangements necessary to his final exit. The executioner places him in the exact spot where the fatal work may be completed. The rope is adjusted, the cap is drawn over his head down to his chin, and the signal is put into his hand. Mr. Cotton then resumes the reading of the burial service:—
“Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth, as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour but of thee, O Lord! who for our sins art justly displeased.

Yet, O Lord God most holy ! O Lord most mighty ! O holy and most merciful Saviour ! deliver us not into the pains of eternal death !” The signal is then given, and in a few moments the prisoner is in eternity.

If one could suppose a man—and there have been instances of the kind, though extremely rare—if one could suppose a man to retain his entire self-possession while standing on the drop immediately before its falling, the thoughts which would under such circumstances crowd on his mind, would necessarily be of a most solemn nature. To think that he is this moment in perfect health—it may be in the prime of life—and that the next his body will be a piece of inanimate clay, and his spirit in the presence of the Supreme Being ; to think that this moment he is surrounded by his fellow-beings on earth, and the next will be amidst the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of departed saints, or else consigned to the abodes of everlasting despair,—these are thoughts which are surely adapted, if anything could be, to

inspire the mind with feelings of the deepest awe. Whatever may be the destiny of the man who thus expires on the scaffold, how great and sudden must be the transition he undergoes !

The spectacle of the execution of a human being ought to be one of a deeply affecting nature to all who behold it. It is so to every spectator of a well regulated mind. To the vast majority, however, of those thousands who witness such scenes, it has nothing affecting in it. They look upon it precisely in the same light as if it were a drama got up for their special amusement. And rather than be deprived of the sight they will pay for a view of it,—just as they would for admission to a theatre. So early as five o'clock on an execution morning, you will see crowds of persons trooping from all parts of the metropolis towards the Old Bailey. The leading thoroughfares present continued streams of them. They are, with very few exceptions, the most depraved and the most criminal of the population. Their uproarious conduct, their shouts of laughter, their vile expressions, their

imprecations on themselves and on each other. all show that in the scale of morals they are but a few removes from the brute creation.

The scenes which used to be exhibited on the scaffold, were sometimes of a most deeply touching nature, regarded merely in reference to this world. One who was on the scaffold on the occasion of an execution for a very trifling felony, lately mentioned to me that the unhappy man, on reaching the eminence from whence he was to drop into eternity, said he had just one remaining wish ungratified, and that was to get one last look of his wife before he died. He added he was sure that no earthly power would have prevented her from being among the crowd. As he uttered the words he looked eagerly around on the assemblage. His eye, strange as it may seem, did actually recognise his wife; he kissed his hand to her, gave her a most benignant smile, and looked up to heaven as if invoking the Divine blessing on her behalf. He sobbed out to the Rev. Gentleman who was present to administer the last offices of religion to

him, that he could now die contented; in less than a minute his spirit was before the throne of the Eternal.

Another instance of a very affecting nature, arising also from the devoted attachment of the prisoner to his wife, occurred some ten or twelve years since, in the case of a member of the Society of Friends; the only one of their members, I may mention as an act of justice to that excellent body of men, who had suffered on the scaffold for a century before. The unfortunate individual in question was executed for forgery. Immediately before the cap was put on his head, which, as before stated, is among the last of the preparations for the awful impending catastrophe, he desired the Rev. Ordinary to take from his pocket,—not being able to do it himself in consequence of his hands being pinioned,—a farewell letter he had received the previous evening from his wife. The Rev. Gentleman having given him the letter, the unhappy man raised it with his pinioned hands to his mouth, loaded it with the most affectionate kisses, and

then depositing it in his bosom, gave the fatal signal, and in a few moments was in another world.

Talk of the romance of fiction! Will any one point out to me in the wide range of fiction anything more deeply touching than the simple unvarnished incidents I have mentioned in the two cases just given? Alas! that ever the laws or judges of England, should have doomed such men to suffer an ignominious death for offences of so trivial a nature!

Novelists would occasionally find excellent materials for their works, in Newgate. I shall only mention one strikingly romantic case which fell under the personal observation of Mr. C——, an acquaintance of my own. About twelve years since, two men were executed for uttering a 5*l.* note, knowing it to be forged. My acquaintance happened to be present at the execution. In the course of an hour or so after it was over, he chanced to meet with a person he knew, with whom he entered into conversation on the subject of the drama which had been enacted at

Newgate. Mr. C—— had been expressing his regret at the unfortunate circumstance of two men being doomed to lose their lives for the simple utterance of a forged 5*l.* note : the other treated the thing with levity, and indulged in a variety of coarse unfeeling jokes on the subject. “Did they swing in excellent style? Did their heels dangle nicely in the air?” he inquired. Mr. C——, in the first instance, reproved him for his ill-timed jokes on so melancholy a subject. This only made him worse. At length, worked up to a temporary excitement, my acquaintance left the other quite hastily, telling him, as he quitted the house in which they had met, that he had better take care lest he himself should share the same fate as the two unfortunate men, before he quitted the world. Mr. C—— soon after went to the country, and did not return to town for four months. On his arrival, he heard that an execution was to take place the following morning, but without being aware who the party was. He resolved on being present. He was so. About an hour before

the execution, he went into the cell of the prisoner, accompanied by several other persons. At first he did not recognise the prisoner; but he had not been in the apartment many seconds, when the prisoner advanced to him, and addressing him by his name, begged to be allowed to speak privately to him. The governor of the place acceded to the prisoner's request; but begged him to be as quick as possible, as he had now so short a period to live. "Mr. C—," said he, "do you recollect when you and I met in the Red Lion, a few months ago?" Mr. C— answered in the affirmative. "And the nature of our conversation?" Mr. C—— said he did. "Well then, that evening I purchased of a Jew, and uttered the flash five-pound note for the utterance of which I am now about to lose my life. I have been most earnestly desiring to see you to express my deep regret for the improper language I made use of regarding the two men who were then executed. I am now about to suffer for the very same offence."

Of late, as I shall afterwards have occasion

to state more particularly, there has not been any great sacrifice of life at the Old Bailey. It was far different formerly. From the middle of the last century downwards to a few years since, the annals of our London criminal jurisprudence present us with one continued stream of human blood. The executions have often in the course of that period been between fifty and sixty per annum. The Bank of England alone could boast—for there are parties connected with that establishment who used to talk of the thing as if it had been a matter for boasting—the Bank could boast, year after year, of sacrificing its thirty or forty victims to the forgery of its notes. I know of nothing more painful in British history,—or which ought to make us more ashamed of our country—for the sixty or seventy years preceding the recent amelioration of the criminal code,—than the fact of so many of our fellow-men being offered up to the Juggernaut of a sanguinary statute book. Laws are generally supposed to be made for the protection of human life: for a course of years it seemed as

if our laws had been made for its extinction. The destruction of life in this country, and in the metropolis especially, was truly frightful. The most trifling offences were punished with death. Even in cases where, morally, there was no guilt at all, and where, even legally, every circumstance attendant on the commission of the offence was in favour of the prisoner,—even in these cases nothing would satisfy the Draconian spirit of our criminal jurisprudence, but the life of the party. Who can look back on the execution of Dr. Dodd, coupled with a knowledge of the circumstances under which that unfortunate man suffered, without feelings of the deepest pain, and of shame for a country that could have tolerated such things? Dr. Dodd merely forged the name of a nobleman with whom he was on terms of the closest intimacy, for a small sum to meet some pressing demand; and even this was done, not with the view of defrauding any one, but under the most assured conviction, that by the time the bill had become due, he would be able to meet it, and

consequently no one ever know anything about it. Yet for this offence our sanguinary laws were inexorable in demanding the life of the unfortunate divine. Some time after came the execution of a poor woman, whose melancholy story is so touchingly related in a speech for the modification of our then criminal jurisprudence, by the late Sir William Meredith. She had gone into a draper's shop and had taken up, if I remember rightly, a small piece of flannel, worth eighteen pence, which she intended to pawn for as much as would purchase a fourpenny loaf of bread to save herself and her infant at the breast, from starvation. What made the case of this poor woman the more affecting was, that she was young and beautiful, was an entire stranger to crime, and had been in comfortable circumstances, but had been reduced to utter destitution from the circumstances of her husband having been seized by a press-gang, and put on board a-man-of-war. Without entering into details, I may mention that the judges of that period seemed to have such a penchant, as the French

say, for human blood, that various cases of executions for stealing two or three penny tarts from a confectioner's shop, are on record. Not even youth was any protection against the Draconian spirit of the laws and those entrusted with the administration of them. For the most trivial acts of felony, mere boys were then doomed to suffer on the scaffold. What must have been the constitution of the minds of those judges who could sanction executions for such offences, it is difficult to conceive. The very thought, one would suppose, that such things should be, must have made every one shudder in whose breast there was left one trace of humanity. And yet the judges of a former time could, so far as we are aware, be parties to such transactions day after day, and year after year, without one single compunctious visiting.

But a better day has dawned on us. The rigour of our criminal code has been greatly relaxed.

It is a most gratifying circumstance that there have been so few executions in London of late

years, compared with the number at previous periods. With the single exception of one unfortunate man who suffered in March last, there has been no execution in London for four years past. This happy diminution in the number of executions is principally owing to the recent alteration in the criminal code, which abolishes capital punishments in the case of so many offences to which they were formerly annexed. The result of the experiment made by the legislature as to the efficiency of secondary punishments to repress crime—for I believe the legislature only viewed the matter as an experiment—has been a complete confirmation of the views of those philanthropic individuals who, for some years previously, had laboured with a zeal and assiduity which exceed all praise, to soften the rigours of our criminal code. I have here especially in my eye, the “Society for the Diffusion of Information on Capital Punishments.” Circumstances have made me better acquainted with the labours of this Society than the public generally can be, and I should not be doing jus-

tice to my own feelings, did I not take this opportunity of expressing my conviction, that the annals of benevolence afford but few parallels to the purity of motive in which that Society had its origin, and to the untiring perseverance with which, for a series of years, it laboured to promote its humane objects. It has always sought to shun rather than to court the public gaze. If ever a Society did good by stealth, it is the Society in question. It has pursued the quiet and even tenor of its way, amidst circumstances of a most discouraging nature—so discouraging, indeed, that nothing but the consciousness of being engaged in a most righteous cause, could have supported it under them. The great truth which this Society has laboured so earnestly to impress on the legislature and the country, is, that putting out of view the injustice and inhumanity of sanguinary punishments, a lenient criminal code is much better adapted to repress or diminish crime. The result has most conclusively proved the truth of the position. There has been a very great diminution in the number of those

offences which, previous to the last few years, were punished with death, since the alteration referred to came into operation. I intended to have gone into details on this subject; but that would occupy too much space. It is, besides, unnecessary, as the parliamentary returns in which the fact is established, are already before the country. I may be told that this diminution in the number of offences, formerly capital, but now no longer so, is to be ascribed to a decrease of crime consequent on the improved circumstances of the country, and that it is not the result of the greater efficiency of secondary punishments. There is one very short but very conclusive answer to this: there has been in the very same period an increase in all the minor offences, in other words, to those to which the extreme penalty of the law was not before annexed. But, therefore, for the superior efficacy of milder punishments, why should there not have been a corresponding increase in the offences which were formerly capital?

But the position that a lenient system of

criminal jurisprudence is more efficacious than a sanguinary one, is as much in accordance with philosophy as it is with experience. The injured party, under our previous Draconian code, rather, in many cases, passively submitted to the injury than prosecute the offender, when they knew that his death would be the result of a conviction. And juries, on the same just and humane principle, hesitated to convict, even where the evidence was quite conclusive. The consequence was, that the offender often escaped altogether. Hence criminals, under the former system, speculated on the chances of escaping punishment, even should they be detected in the commission of the offence. This, of course, was holding out a strong temptation to crime. Now, however, that the punishment is more proportioned to the crime, the injured party have no scruples in prosecuting, and juries unhesitatingly convict where the evidence is clear. Criminals, therefore, now know that they have no chance of escape in so far as the prosecutor or the jury are concerned; they know that their punish-

ment is certain ; and the *certainty*, not the *severity* of punishment, has always been found to be the great preventive of crime. The history of all other countries, as well as our own, in which the effect of sanguinary and lenient punishments has been severally tried, concurs in proving that the latter is most calculated to repress crime.

The great argument urged by the advocates of capital punishments in favour of the enforcement of the extreme penalty, has always been the necessity of an example. The facts already stated, have abundantly proved that executions have never operated in the way of salutary example ; and a moment's reflection might have served to convince any one that they never could. The foot of the gallows is not the place to learn one's duty, either to the Deity or to society. The spectacle of an execution necessarily tends to harden or brutalise the mind. All experience shows, that the more a man becomes familiarised with death, under any form, the less he thinks of it. In the case of executions for secondary offences, the mind of

the spectator was always withdrawn from the offence itself, to indulge in sympathy with the offender,—he being regarded as a victim to a sanguinary system of criminal jurisprudence. Even when the executions are for murder, those executions do not operate by way of example. It is too notorious to be denied, that the utmost levity is manifested by many of the spectators. Numbers of them, indeed, attend those painful spectacles with no other view than that of picking pockets, or otherwise practising their light-fingered profession.

The scenes which were sometimes exhibited at the Old Bailey when our criminal code existed in all its unmitigated rigour, were of the most shocking nature. On one occasion, about twenty years since, no fewer than twenty-one human beings were executed there on one morning, and all for secondary offences. Let any one only fancy that he sees all those unfortunate persons suspended for an hour in the air, in the midst of one of our most crowded thoroughfares, and he will be able to form some idea of

what must have been the shock which every humane mind must have received, who accidentally, or otherwise, was fated to witness so barbarous a spectacle. It consists with my own private knowledge, that in some cases strangers coming from the country, who knew nothing of there being executions at the particular time, have had their feelings so shocked by suddenly witnessing such sights, as never afterwards entirely to recover from the effects of the scene. To me it appears as clear as any moral proposition can be, that revelation, justice, humanity, and even social expediency, all loudly proclaim, that no crime but that of wilfully taking the life of a fellow-creature, ought to be punished with death. Whether even the murderer ought to die by the hands of the executioner, is a question with many of the most excellent and enlightened men in the country. They think that the Divine Being has never delegated to man the right of shedding the blood of a fellow-man; and that solitary imprisonment would answer all the ends of justice. On this point I

will express no opinion of my own, not being quite decided either way. It is one, however, which is deserving the most serious attention of the legislature and the country.

I cannot close my chapter on Newgate, without a word or two respecting two of the leading individuals connected with it. I allude to the Rev. Dr. Cotton, the Ordinary, and Mr. Baker. Dr. Cotton is a man who is deeply imbued with the spirit of that religion whose minister he is. There is something serious in his very appearance. His countenance is grave, and his demeanour is of that nature which becomes his sacred office. His white, long, flowing hair, coupled with his advanced years, impart something of an unusually venerable aspect to his appearance. He is indefatigable in his attention to the duties of his office; and the respect with which he invariably inspires all who come in contact with him, often procures him access to criminals who peremptorily refuse to admit of the visits of other pious individuals. He has, there can be no question,

been the means of doing much good within the walls of Newgate.

Of Mr. Baker I may say the same. His Christian philanthropy has been productive of great spiritual benefit to the unhappy individuals who, since he began to visit Newgate, have been sentenced to death. He is a man of a kind and benevolent heart, and spares no amount of personal exertion where there is even the chance of doing good. His manners are conciliatory in no ordinary degree, and have often paved the way to the minds of culprits, when a sterner or more unbending exhibition of conduct, would have failed to secure attention. He is respected by all about the place, as well as by those of the unfortunate inmates who have occasion to come in contact with him. He has been the instrument of much spiritual good within the walls of Newgate: it is to be hoped he will yet be the instrument of a great deal more. He is not officially connected with the place; but performs all his labours gratuitously from the pure desire of doing good.

CHAPTER V.

PENNY-A-LINERS.

Precariousness of their employment—Their labour and enterprise — Their character—Their ingenuity in finding employment for themselves—The feeling they entertain towards each other—Various anecdotes respecting them—Immutability of their character and phraseology—Concluding observations.

EVERY one has heard of a class of persons in connexion with the London journals, called “Penny-a-Liners;” but none but those who are intimately acquainted with the arrangements of newspaper offices, know anything about them. They are altogether a singular race; they are a class, in a great measure, by themselves; they live by the press, and yet they do not, strictly

speaking, belong to the press. They have no regular sum for their labours; sometimes no sum at all. If there be what the thimble-riggers at Greenwich and other fairs call “the fortune of war” in any line of business, it is in theirs. Sometimes they will fag away without a moment’s intermission for seven or eight hours, writing in that time as much matter as would fill from a column to a column and a half of a morning newspaper, walking, it may be, in addition, five or six miles, and yet not receive one penny, notwithstanding all their enterprise and exertion. No paper is bound to use the matter, or any part of it, which they furnish; for they were not sent by any one connected with the press, to the meetings or the coroner’s inquests, of whose proceedings their reports usually consist, but went of their own accord. In other words, it was all matter of speculation; quite a toss up whether they should receive the Irishman’s fortune—nothing at all; or whether they should pocket five or six pounds by the adventure. The former, I must, however, say, is the most fre-

quent occurrence. I have no idea that we shall ever have a treatise, with illustrative examples, of any value, "On the Caprices of Fortune," until it is written by a Penny-a-Liner. To-day they have not one farthing in their pockets; to-morrow, the entire sum due to them by the daily papers may be several pounds. When their matter is inserted, or, to use their own phraseology, their copy is used, they are paid at the rate of three-halfpence for every line. The price originally was a penny a line; hence the origin of their designation. A column of a morning paper produces at this rate from thirty to forty shillings. It is but seldom, however, one of them is so fortunate as to get an entire column of matter into any of the papers; but he does now and then get in half a column or so, into three or four out of the six morning papers; and the joint produce is a few pounds. It often happens, that owing to the press of parliamentary or other matter furnished by the regular reporters of the morning journals, or to the absence of any peculiar interest in the matter

they have procured, that some of them will not realise a sovereign for weeks in succession. On the other hand, they have the good fortune of occasionally meeting with "something," which not only enables them to clear off old scores, but replenishes their pockets for some time to come. A "horrible murder," such as that of Thurtell's, rejoices the hearts of the Penny-a-Liners. They call it a "windfall." To work they set directly, and everything connected with the murdered party and the murderer, is hunted out by them with an alacrity which exceeds all belief. If no romantic materials exist, they call in the aid of their inventive faculties. They consider anything bearing on the romantic or horrible as a sort of mine, which they work with most exemplary industry. The produce, as I have already hinted, is sometimes considerable. One of them made, from first to last, nearly 70*l.* out of Thurtell's murder. In 1833, another reaped an abundant harvest. The "subject," as they sometimes call it, was an inquest on the body of a man in Shadwell,

who had been suspected to have been murdered by a policeman. One person chanced to have a monopoly of it, and the inquest lasted five days; and as each of the morning papers had from a column and a half to two columns of the proceedings daily, it brought him about 50*l*.

But the Penny-a-Liners do not confine their exertions within the limits of the metropolis: in the true spirit of speculation, if matters are dull in town, they will go when they hear of anything important, two or three hundred miles into the country. In many instances these adventures prove entire failures; owing either to the thing not turning out as they expected, or to the editors of the morning papers sending down their own reporters to report the proceedings. The hardship, in such cases, is particularly great: they have endured much anxiety of mind, encountered much bodily fatigue, and incurred the expense of several pounds, which they had most probably raised with great difficulty, all to no purpose. Sometimes, however, a good hit is made in this way: the best one of late,

was the reporting the proceedings of an inquest on the bodies of some men who had been shipwrecked on the northern coast, and where, it was suspected, some of the more influential of the parties in the neighbourhood had taken from the persons of the drowned men, considerable property. The proceeds to the young man who went down on the occasion, could not have been less than from 40% to 50%.

I have alluded to the way in which the Penny-a-Liners work "mines" of this kind. The quantity of words they use is amazing. Dean Swift once remarked, that a surgeon would take half an hour to tell you that a patient had broken his leg, whereas the unfortunate man himself would acquaint you with the fact in five words—"I have broken my leg." It is the same with the Penny-a-Liners. They will spin out to the extent of half a column, what might be given with the greatest ease in a dozen lines. And it is all quite natural; the solution of the thing is to be found in the fact, that they are paid by the quantity. If they have occasion to mention

that a deputation waited for any particular purpose on Mr. Spring Rice, they will say, "waited on the Right Honourable Thomas Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his own office, in Downing Street, Whitehall." They are fond of expletives. If they have occasion to say that the tendency of any measure is to produce tranquillity, they will say, "peace, concord, harmony, and tranquillity." A few months since, one of them, in stating the fact that one of the doors of Newgate was opened to admit some persons who were on a visit to it, expressed himself as follows:—"The door was unlocked, unbarred, unbolted, and opened." But not only do the Penny-a-Liners spin out any report or piece of information they are fortunate enough to procure, but they will sometimes write a good part of a newspaper column, to tell their readers that they have nothing to communicate. They thus improve on the American editor, who published a second edition to inform the public that he had no additional intelligence to give. A few months since, a Penny-a-Liner wrote a full

quarter of a column to say that the subject of peerage reform was *not* brought forward at a particular meeting of the Marylebone vestry. This reminds me of the author who wrote forty pages of a preface to his book for the purpose of proving that no preface was necessary.

A more unenviable mode of life than that of the Penny-a-Liners does not exist. Dependent entirely on their own resources, their minds are constantly racked with anxiety, to find out when or where anything is to be done. They know not a moment's repose. Every new day brings with it its own anxieties. They are wonderfully quick at scenting out intelligence of any important meeting about to be held, or any other matter which they suppose likely to produce a penny. Falstaff knew royalty by instinct; and they seem to find out "subjects" by the same quality. Things that nobody else ever heard a word about, are so well and generally known to them, that out of the eighteen or twenty which compose their number, there will be a muster of nine or ten. Often, indeed, do

their numbers exceed that of the persons taking part in the proceedings they report. At a meeting held two years ago in the vestry-room of St. Clement Danes, relative to some parish matters, the number of parishioners present was seven ; the number of Penny-a-Liners nine !

It is impossible to say how much they average per month ; but their vocation is certainly not a lucrative one. I have no idea that taking one month with another, the majority of them earn more than six pounds, or thirty shillings per week.

If an Irishman of the lower orders be asked what country he comes from, he adds, after telling you it is from "ould Ireland," "and sure there are good and bad of all countries." The observation applies with special force to the Penny-a-Liners. If ever the extremes of good and bad met in any class of men, it is in them. I am sorry to say, however, that the bad preponderates in number over the good. Some of them are great drinkers. One poor fellow died last year who was known, for some years past,

to have been drunk for weeks in succession. Tom Paine is said to have been drunk six weeks before his death. The Penny-a-Liner to whom I refer, has repeatedly been drunk for a longer period than that. His favourite drink was porter, with an occasional glass of gin by way of parenthesis. Some time before his death, he drank at one sitting of several hours, in a public house in Fleet-street, the astonishing quantity of twenty-two pints of porter! The statement may appear incredible : it did so to myself when I first heard it; but my curiosity having led me to make inquiries into the thing, I may mention that its truth is placed beyond all doubt. There are some very excellent young men amongst them, whom one cannot but regret to see so unfortunately circumstanced; but the majority are destitute of all honourable principle, and of very exceptionable habits. They never hesitate for a moment at palming on the sub-editors of the morning papers—for it is the province of the sub-editors to accept or reject

their matter—the purest inventions of their own, provided they think it can be done without detection. And in order to make the most of the thing, two of them will sometimes come to an understanding together, that the one shall send a detailed contradiction to-morrow of what the other had sent to-day. The proceeds, in such a case, are shared between the parties. Nay, to such a length in deliberate imposition will some of them go, that the same person, under a different name, and writing in a disguised hand, will contradict to-morrow what he himself has sent to-day. The editors of newspapers, of course, always take care, when they have detected any fraud of this kind, to exclude any future matter which the party may send; but the latter often evades the effects of the editor's determination, by assuming some new name, or by employing some one to send his copy in theirs, making some allowance to the party who proves so accommodating. All the “romantic affairs,” “mysterious circumstances,” &c. which from

time to time appear in the London journals, worded in general terms, are specimens of the inventive capabilities of the Penny-a-Liners. I knew one who made from 200% to 250% every year by repeating the same series of invented stories in rotation. The whole number was turned over every three years.

The Penny-a-Liners sometimes bring themselves into awkward predicaments by a too liberal exercise of their inventive faculties. They generally, however, contrive, by having recourse to some ingenious expedient or other, to make their escape out of it. Some years ago, one of the fraternity gave a "full and particular"—I cannot say "true"—account of an alleged suicide of a gentleman by leaping off Waterloo Bridge into the river. The writer, of course, said he witnessed it, and was surpassingly pathetic and eloquent in the expression of his regret that the unfortunate deceased should have "committed the rash act." An elaborate description of the personal appearance of the party was given. The body, of course, was not found. The account having appeared in two of

the morning papers, two gentlemen called at the office of one of the journals, and expressing their apprehensions that from the description given of the unhappy man, it was a near relation of their own who had been missing two days—wished to see the writer, to make some further inquiries as to the indentivity of the deceased. An intimation to this effect was sent to the Penny-a-Liner, who, on the first blush of the thing, was afraid he had got himself, to use his own elegant phraseology, “into a hobble.” However, a thought afterwards struck him which he doubted not would enable him to get out of the difficulty with great *éclat*. He accordingly proceeded to the office where the two gentlemen were anxiously awaiting his arrival.

“O, we’re very sorry to trouble you; but this is a very affecting case,” observed one of the gentlemen, in melancholy accents, immediately upon the Penny-a-Liner presenting himself.

“It is, indeed,” observed the other, sighing deeply as he spoke.

“About the unhappy man who threw himself into the river, I suppose you mean,” said the

Penny-a-Liner, putting on a face as grave as that of an undertaker, and appearing to sympathise feelingly with the manifest distresses of the gentleman.

“Yes, about the unfortunate deceased,” observed one of the gentlemen.

“Ay, we’re very much afraid he’s a near relation of ours, Sir,” remarked the other. “Would you do us the favour of giving us any further information respecting his personal appearance, so that we may be able to satisfy our minds as to whether or not he is our relative?” he added.

“What was the colour of your relative’s hair?” inquired the Penny-a-Liner.

“Yellow haired,” answered both at once.

“O, then, the unfortunate deceased was not your relative; for his hair was jet black.”

A gleam of joy irradiated the countenances of the two gentlemen. “I assure you, Sir, we are infinitely obliged to you for your readiness in complying with our wishes.”

“Don’t name it,” remarked the inventive genius.

“Exceedingly obliged to you, indeed,” said

the second gentleman. "Will you accept of a couple of sovereigns for the trouble to which we have thus put you?" at the same time depositing two circular pieces of gold in his hand.

"Really, you are very kind. I am extremely happy the unfortunate gentleman was not your relative," said the Penny-a-Liner, putting the sovereigns into his pocket. He went home, and penned another "invention" that evening, respecting the alleged suicide of "an interesting and elegantly dressed female"—all the females of Penny-a-Liners are "interesting and elegantly dressed"—by throwing herself into the Regent's canal.

Another ingenious expedient for getting out of "a scrape," as the Penny-a-Liners sometimes call such things, was lately resorted to by one of the brotherhood. He had fabricated a very elaborate account of some supposed "melancholy accident," the scene of which he fixed at a particular place in the suburbs of town. On the day after the paragraph, redolent with expressions of deep regret at having to communi-

cate the painful intelligence, &c., appeared a letter, with the writer's name attached to it, sent to the editor of the journal in which the account was published, denying that any such circumstance had occurred. The editor sent for the Penny-a-Liner to take him to task for the unfounded statement. On his way to the "Morning ———" office, the latter called on a friend, and said he was afraid he would be found out this time, adding that he did not know what he could say when the journalist should show him the letter denying the truth of the paragraph.

"Och, faith, and it's myself will be after telling you what to say," observed his friend, who was a 'Paddy from Cork.'

"What do you think I should say?" inquired the other, eagerly.

"Why, tell him to be sure, whenever he shows you the letther, that it's written by a particular friend of your own, who knew the paragraph was yours, for the purpose of having a little fun;*

* The signature was Thomas Smith, and the letter was dated Exeter-place, Mile-end Road.

and that the writer knows quite well that the whole thing is intirely thrue.”

The idea struck the Penny-a-Liner as excellent ; and he determined to act on the hint. He proceeded forthwith to the sanctorum of the editor.

“ So, Sir,” said the journalist, sternly, as he entered the apartment—“ So, Sir, you have been injuring the Morning ———, and grossly deceiving the public. Look at that, Sir,”—tossing the letter down on the table before him.

The Penny-a-Liner took up the letter, and opening it, first looked at the signature, and then at the date. “ Why, Mr. P.—” affecting to enjoy the alleged joke—“ why, Mr. P., this letter is written by my own particular friend Tom Smith, of Mile-end Road. I told him I had written the paragraph, and he has only done this for a bit of a lark.”

“ O, if that’s all,” observed the editor, in a subdued tone, “ if that’s all, the fire is the best place in which to insert the letter which the blockhead wished to publish.” Mr. P. thrust

the letter into the fire that instant, and he and the Penny-a-Liner parted on better terms than ever, Mr. P. apologising for the unnecessary trouble he had given the paragraph-monger.

I shall only mention one other instance of the trouble into which Penny-a-Liners often get themselves by their fabricated accounts of the “horrible,” and of the ingenuity they evince in getting out again. Sometime before the death of Mr. Perry, the then proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, a long account of a “most horrible murder,” said to have been committed in an open space called the B—— at Brompton, was sent to him. Never for one moment suspecting its accuracy, he inserted it in the paper of the following day. In two days afterwards a letter was forwarded to him, signed by about thirty of the most respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood, denying that any such circumstance had occurred, and severely lecturing the journalist for giving publicity to false reports of so serious a nature. As one of the evils which had arisen from the publication of the paragraph,

it was stated that servants were afraid to go out about the neighbourhood after dark, and that the children of the inhabitants in the vicinity were nearly frightened out of their wits at the alleged murder. Mr. Perry, in the first instance, published the letter contradicting the pretended murder, and then sent for the Penny-a-Liner. The rascal stoutly insisted that the whole narrative was true to the letter, and expressed his firm assurance that the journalist would immediately receive a counter-statement from some of the inhabitants of Brompton, confirming all that he had stated. "Well, Sir, if I do, you shall be absolved from all blame," said the journalist, in gruff tones: "but if not," he immediately added,—"but if not, remember, Sir, that you shall never write another line for the 'Morning Chronicle.'" The journalist and the Penny-a-Liner then parted. That very evening Mr. Perry received a letter signed "Veritas," with the two-penny post-mark of Brompton on it, in which the writer assured the Editor of the 'Morning Chronicle,' that every word of

the account of the "horrible murder at Brompton" was strictly true, and that the object of the parties who sent the contradiction of it was, by dwelling on the fears of servants to go out in the neighbourhood of the place at night, to get a police established in the neighbourhood. The Penny-a-Liner wrote the letter himself, and to prevent suspicion had gone out and put it into the Brompton two-penny post-office with his own hand. Mr. P— was perfectly satisfied: he thought the Penny-a-Liner was an injured man, and was happy that he had not thoughtlessly made him a victim to the faithful performance of his duty.

But though the Penny-a-Liners, in playing such tricks as I have mentioned, often escape detection for years, they are usually found out at last. Some years ago, the circumstances under which the impositions of one of the fraternity were brought to light, were amusing in no ordinary degree. , Joseph Thomson, who dealt in invented paragraphs touching inquests, horrible murders, and so forth, on a much more extensive scale

than any of his Penny-a-Line contemporaries, chanced one day to "get up" a very affecting coroner's inquest. The inquest was represented as having been held at the "Cat and Bag"* public house, Islington, and the jury, as all juries at coroner's inquests are, were "highly respectable." With the view of making the case more attractive, the Penny-a-Liner determined on giving the paragraph a touch of the romantic. His story—a story in a double sense—was to the effect, that the unfortunate deceased was a young woman of great personal attractions, and dressed in the extreme of fashion—that her body had been found on the previous morning in the Regent's Canal—that she had been walking on the banks of the canal the night before, with a young gentleman, supposed to be her lover, and that two love letters, without a name attached to them, were found in her bosom. These pretended facts were spun out to the great length which Penny-a-Liners patronise,

* It can hardly be necessary to say that there was no such public-house.

and they were worked up in most elaborate and high-flown language. Of course, the inquest excited the deepest interest in the neighbourhood. Even the coroner himself—a very unusual thing—seemed deeply affected while the examination into the probable way in which the unfortunate deceased came by her death, was going on. The verdict of the jury was the very sapient one of—“Found drowned.” The inventor of the story, who used to go by the name of Mungo among the brotherhood of Penny-a-Liners, having finished the thing, went with his “copy”—a technical term among this class of persons—to the office of a Sunday paper, now boasting a very large circulation. It chanced, that while the paragraph was lying on the editor’s desk, and while he himself was temporarily absent from his room, another Penny-a-Liner, a native of the Emerald Isle, called Tim O’Callaghan, dropped in with an account of some horrible accident which had really happened. Seeing the open copy before him, and being attracted by the title, three times underlined by

large scores, of "Melancholy Case," his curiosity got the better of his good manners, and he began to read the paragraph. Once begun, there was no ending—not, at any rate, for a Penny-a-Liner—till he got to the close of the paragraph. He accordingly read till he got to the verdict of the jury, and having a good memory all the pretended facts of the case were distinctly impressed on his mind. As he quitted the office, a thought struck him. "Thunder and turf!" said he to himself, "why should this spalpeen of a Penny-a-Line reporter have all the benefit of this maalanchoy caase to himself?" Pat hurried to the nearest public-house and drew out an account of the same case, strictly adhering to the supposed facts, and sent it to the only other Sunday paper which he thought likely to use it on the following day,—this being on a Saturday. Pat's paragraph duly appeared, to the ineffable amazement of Mungo. As the thing never had an existence, other than in his own imagination, he knew on a little reflection, that there must, as he himself said, be some foul play; and the conclusion

to which he came came was, that some subordinate in the office to which he sent his manuscript, had picked out the facts, dressed up the thing in his own style, and sent the paragraph to the office of the other newspaper with the view of getting a few shillings to himself. "I'm blowed though," ejaculated he to himself, "if the rascal gets the money," and in order to prevent his fingering a sixpence of the produce, Mungo made a point of being at the office on its opening on Monday morning. He claimed the amount due for the paragraph.

"Why, the man's mad," said the clerk.

"Not a bit of it," said Mungo.

"Then you're a rogue," observed the clerk.

"How do you mean?" asked Mungo.

"Why, when you could go and ask, or expect me to pay money for, what does not belong to you."

"It's my inquest," remarked Mungo.

"That's a downright invention, I must be plain to tell you," said the other.

Mungo's face slightly coloured at the word

“invention,” supposing, in the first instance, that the clerk applied it to the paragraph, and that his tricks in the inventive way had been found out.

“*What’s* an invention?” asked Mungo.

“Why, your saying that the inquest is your’s. It’s Tim O’Callaghan’s.”

“I maintain it is mine. I’m ready to prove that——”

Here Mungo was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Tim O’Callaghan.

“You are just come in time,” said the clerk, addressing himself to Tim as he entered the office.

“What’s the matther?” said Tim hastily, and in a strong Connaught brogue.

“Why this person,” pointing to Mungo, “says that your account of the inquest at the ‘Cat and Bag’ on Saturday, is his.”

“O bad luck to the ——! How could he be after saying such a thing?”

“I insist on it, that the matter of it is mine,” observed Mungo.

“Och,” observed Tim, “you may insist on

what you please, but where's the mother's son will believe you? It's in my hand-writing: is it not, Mr. Jones?" addressing himself to the clerk.

"It is, certainly," answered the latter.

"And sure isn't that the best proof that the inquest's mine," said Paddy, eagerly. "Come, tip me the money, Mr. Jones, if it's convenient."

"I say the inquest's mine," said Mungo, in a very angry tone.

"Never mind him, Mr. Jones," said Tim, "he does not believe the thing himself."

"You were not at the inquest at all," said Mungo, addressing himself to Pat.

"And that same's a thundering untruth," answered Tim.

"In what part of the room did you stand then?" inquired Mungo.

"And sure I'm not obligated to tell you that," said Pat, assuming a look of infinite surprise at such a question being put to him.

“ Ah, because you can’t tell,” remarked the other. “ You were not there at all.”

“ But I was though, as sure as I hope to —”

“ You may tell him at once,” said the clerk, “ where you stood, if that be any satisfaction to him.”

“ Well, then,” said Tim, “ I stood directly behind the beadle.”

“ What sort of a man was he?” inquired Mungo.

“ What sort of a man was he? Why, I’ll tell you what sort of a man he was,” answered Tim, after a moment’s hesitation, “ sure, he was a very little thick sort of man.”

“ O, that proves at once you were not there; for he was a very tall thin person.”

“ Faith, and perhaps it’s myself am mistaking the beadle for some other person. I’m sure there *was* a little stout man in the room. But as for the matter of that it, does not signify at all at all: I was there, and wrote the paragraph.”

“ You’re a confounded l——,” shouted Mungo, unable any longer to restrain his indignation at the cool effrontery of Tim, “ You’re a confounded l——, for no such inquest was ever held. The whole was my own pure invention.”

“ What a couple of consummate rogues you are !” said the clerk. “ The one fabricates and the other steals the paragraph. None of you shall ever finger a farthing of the money, and a single line of your copy shall never from this day be used by our paper.”

Another way in which Penny-a-Liners display their ingenuity is, to use a common proverb, in “ making mountains out of mole hills.” Meetings, or circumstances which possess no earthly importance whatever except to the parties immediately interested, are worked up in such a manner as to have all the appearance of matters of the deepest importance. I could give a variety of amusing instances of this kind. Let one suffice. A year or two ago, a person of whom nobody knew anything, but whose wardrobe was “ all tattered and torn,” like that of

the hero in the nursery story who “kissed the maiden all forlorn”—took it into his head, for some reason or other, to call a meeting in one of the newspapers, to take steps to establish a joint-stock company—capital 150,000*l.*—for carrying into effect some great public improvement. Nobody, however, but the advertiser’s own brother, a needy adventurer; an acquaintance; and three or four Penny-a-Liners, responded to his call. The adventurer himself took the chair without the formality of being voted into it. He stated the purposes for which “the meeting” had assembled, and expatiated on the great public advantage of which his project would be productive *when* carried into effect. The Penny-a-Liners were all as busy at work as if the destinies of the world had hung on the words which dropped from the chairman’s lips. Having exhausted his eloquence he resumed his seat. The brother then rose and proposed the first resolution. He spoke in support of it at some length. The acquaintance seconded it with “great pleasure.” After the

latter had had his "say," the resolution was put. Need I say what was its fate? It was carried *unanimously*. The same process was gone through with the remaining resolutions. The chairman then got up an explanation to the Penny-a-Liners, as to the causes of the thin attendance, and begged them not to say anything about the numbers present—a very unnecessary request by the way, their own interest being to make the most of it. The question of adjournment to that day week was then put and agreed to. In the papers of the following morning a flaming account of the proceedings appeared. The hour for the adjourned meeting taking place, arrived in due course. The "meeting" was held, consisting of exactly the same parties, with the addition of a person, whom the chairman called his friend. Proceedings substantially the same again took place. The Penny-a-Liners were at their post; the meeting was again adjourned to that day-week; and the papers of the following morning again contained an account of the proceedings. "This day

week," once more arrived ; the Penny-a-Liners were "punctual as lovers to the moment sworn," but behold the door was shut ; neither the chairman, nor the other orators, nor anybody else, made their appearance.

In some cases where there is a scarcity of meetings ready made to their hands, the Penny-a-Liners club their wits together to get one or two up for themselves. A very remarkable instance of this occurred about fourteen or fifteen months ago. The case is particularly deserving of mention, because of the circumstances connected with it. They managed—there were three of them engaged in the affair—to get some hand-bills printed, and to procure from an eminent auctioneer the use of one of his rooms for the meeting. The object was to raise a subscription for the wife and two children of a deceased actor of some celebrity. Copies of the hand-bill were sent to several of the most distinguished nobility ; and the Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of St. Albans, and some others, severally sent donations, one of them amounting to

twenty pounds, and another to five pounds. It was expected that the thing would have "taken," and I confess I am surprised, under all the circumstances, that it did not. I certainly thought there would at least have been a strong muster of theatrical people, as the situation of the widow and children of the deceased, might soon be the situation of many of their wives and children. Not so, however; not a single actor was there; and of all the applications which had been made for contributions, to persons connected with the histrionic art, only one forwarded any donation, and that a very small sum. Had they known the parties by whom and the circumstances under which the affair had been got up, that would, undoubtedly, have been an excuse for taking no notice of the appeal made to them for contributions, or the request made to attend the meeting; but they knew nothing about the matter, and they would have evinced, I am afraid, the same indifference to the claims of the widow and orphans of a late fellow-performer, had the facts been otherwise. The time appointed for the meeting

arrived. An application had been previously made to the eminent and eloquent chairman to whom I have already referred, to preside on the occasion. Expecting a full meeting, and anticipating, no doubt, much glory from his oratorical exhibition on the occasion, blended, I am confident, with sympathy for the destitute widow and orphans of the deceased, he engaged to take the chair. On going into the large room where the meeting was to take place, he could scarcely credit the evidence of his eyes when he saw only five persons there, three of whom were those who had waited on him to ask him to preside, and the remaining two were acquaintances whom they had brought with them. Mr. ——— looked perfectly petrified. The whole affair appeared to him to be something beyond the limits of earthly contingencies: it was a mystery, and a very unpleasant mystery, to boot. The trio of Penny-a-Liners—it is but right to add, however, that he was not previously aware of their manner of earning a livelihood—the Penny-a-liners saw at once the mingled emotions of sur-

prise and dismay which filled his breast, and they with singular dexterity “got up” some story or other about the badness of the weather, or inconvenience of the hour, or some such thing, to account for the absence of persons whom they were certain would have attended, and whose hearts they were sure were present with them. By one means or other they actually got Mr. —— to take the chair. He opened the business of the “meeting,” in a speech of some length, in which he displayed his wonted volubility, blended with much that was excellent in feeling, and happy in expression. It is true, he did not seem so much at home as when describing some gentleman’s estate which he “has received instructions to sell;” but that was doubtless in a great measure owing to the remarkable paucity of auditors, which everybody who knows anything of oratory, knows has a most paralysing influence on all public speakers. Resolutions were moved, seconded, and carried, after which the meeting broke up. In the newspapers of the following morning a flaming account appear-

ed of the proceedings. Instead, however, of the Penny-a-Liners giving their own names as the movers and seconders of the several resolutions, they had the sagacity to speak of "gentlemen whose names they could not learn" having discharged those duties. In short, the impression on the public mind next day, from the way in which the report of the proceedings was drawn up, must have been that the meeting was one of very great importance. The only party for whom I felt sorry on the occasion, was the wife of the deceased. I can easily imagine how her bosom must have heaved with transports of delight when she first saw the account of what had transpired. Her joys, however, were only raised to the highest pitch to be dashed again to the ground. Soon would she learn that all had been a delusion—a sort of dream—which had passed through her mind. What became of the subscription afterwards, I could never learn, though from the highly honourable character of the chairman, every farthing of the sum which had gone through

his hands, with, very likely, a donation from himself, was sure to be forthwith handed over to the widow, for her own and her children's benefit.

It were endless to enumerate the stratagems—for the most part very ingenious ones—to which the Penny-a-Liners, in “dull times,” have recourse to furnish themselves with the means of earning a few shillings. With the exceptions to which I have before referred, they are indeed a class of persons who will hesitate at nothing, from mere moral considerations, that they think likely to put a trifle in their pockets.

If one were to judge from the “copy” they send to the newspaper-offices, they must be regarded as a race of beings who possess the attribute of ubiquity. They bring intelligence from the remotest extremities of the metropolis, of circumstances which occurred, according to their own showing, at the same moment. This, however, is chiefly in those cases in which they send their copy to the Sunday journals. These last papers only pay for intelligence relating to occurrences which take place on the Saturday.

In those cases, accordingly, in which the accounts of meetings, coroner's inquests, &c. which were held on Thursday or Friday, have not been "used," by the morning papers of Friday or Saturday, they dress the affairs up again, and represent them as having occurred on Saturday, and then send them to the Sunday papers. The matter itself may be, and usually is, correctly enough given; but the date of the occurrence is changed. This is the solution of the enigma, of how one of them manages to give so much of what he calls Saturday's news, though all occurring at the same time and at the most distant parts of the Metropolis.

The spirit of opposition to one another, exists in an unusual degree among Penny-a-Liners. They are ever devising means to overreach and steal a march on each other. In their anxiety to leave their individual "copy" first at the different offices, they will often, one after another, quit a meeting before the proceedings are half over, and anticipate the remainder the best way they can. Some time ago an interesting

coroner's inquest was held at Pimlico, and as from the nature of the evidence adduced, speculation as to the result would have been quite a hazardous affair, they were obliged to await the deliverance of the foreman of the jury. No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than they all—there were ten present on the occasion—started off like so many race horses through the Park, and down the Strand, to the no small astonishment of the lieges, who wondered what it could be “all about.” There is nothing of greater value to Penny-a-Liners than a pair of good legs. I have heard of their having carried the spirit of rivalry to such lengths, as that the second who arrived at the office, took the copy of his more expeditious opponent off the sub-editor's desk, so that his own might have a better chance of being used. It is, however, but rarely that opportunities of playing such tricks on each other, are afforded them. Instead of being allowed to enter the editorial apartment at all, they are now

obliged to put all their "copy" into a box; through a slit, set apart for the purpose.

As it would be impossible, by the usual method of writing, to furnish copies to the morning papers, in a reasonable time, of any report of proceedings or occurrences of interest, they use a certain kind of manifold writing apparatus, by means of which they "do" six copies at once. The different Journals are consequently supplied simultaneously with the matter which they furnish. The paper employed for the purpose is what is called silver paper. The technical term for it, in the newspaper offices, is "flimsy."

Moralists dwell on the mutability of all things earthly. They forget at the time that there is such a class of persons as Penny-a-Liners. The rule, that all things under the sun are changeable, has fewer exceptions, perhaps, than any other that could be named. It has, however, *some* exceptions. Master Punch I have always looked on as one exception; Penny-a-

Liners, as I have just hinted, are another. Punch has been from time immemorial the same uproarious, bad-tempered, pugnacious, and mischievous fellow we now see him; and he will doubtless continue so to the end of the chapter. Time has made no alteration on him: his character has undergone no modification with the lapse of ages. He is an incorrigible rascal: the schoolmaster can make no impression on him. Intellect, and civilisation, and refinement, may march as rapidly as they please; he will not stir a step with them. Not less proof against the mutations of time is the Penny-a-Liner. That very venerable personage, "the oldest inhabitant," knows no difference on him within the wide range of his experience. History records no alteration or modification in his character. What he was centuries ago, he is still. He retains all his principal phrases precisely in the state he used them generations since. If a coroner's inquest is held over the body of some unfortunate suicide, or any person who came by a sudden death, it was, as before

mentioned, before "a highly respectable jury." Does any serious accident, no matter of what kind, happen, then the announcement of the most distressing feature in the occurrence is prefaced with a "when melancholy to relate." Is some person's premises unfortunately on fire, the "devouring element" and "dreadful conflagration" are sure to have a prominent place in the descriptive paragraph. If the fire has been a destructive one, and the account consequently more lengthened than usual, then you may rely on it that these phrases will, as Junius says of the figures of Sir William Draper, dance through it in all the mazes of metaphorical confusion. Is some unhappy man doomed to suffer on the scaffold, the Penny-a-Liner is sure to adhere to the time immemorial usage of the brotherhood, and to wind up his account of the spectacle by informing us, that "on the signal being given, the drop fell," and that the unhappy party was "launched into eternity." And as the Penny-a-Liner is the same now as he was in past ages, so will he continue the same through ages yet

to come. "What is Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?" What are the modifications of society, produced by circumstances, to the Penny-a-Liner, or he to the modifications of society? He is a being by himself. He stands as isolated from everybody and everything else, as if he were the only human being or object in the world. Not more immutable are the everlasting Alps, than is the character of the Penny-a-Liner. Down he goes to the latest posterity, with all his peculiar habits and phrases unmodified and unaltered. He transmits them to his successors in precisely the same state as he himself received them from those who went before him. Never was there a more faithful guardian of a public trust.

It may be right to repeat, in conclusion, that the remarks I have made in a former part of the chapter respecting the morals and literary capabilities of the Penny-a-Liners do not apply universally : they only apply to them as a class. There are not only among them men of unexceptionable morals, but of great talent. Many

of those who now occupy important situations connected with the press, have commenced their career as Penny-a-Liners. One of the best known Poor-Law Commissioners was for many years a Penny-a-Liner. Cobbett, with his usual disposition to call names, used always to term this gentleman "Penny-a-Line ——." There are at present several gentlemen of some celebrity in the literary world, who have been for a considerable portion of their lives, Penny-a-Liners; only they do not associate with nor have any connexion with the brotherhood generally.

THE END.

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